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SHORT STORIES
A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 611. FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

A HAIRDRESSER AND

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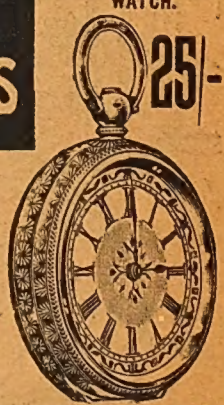

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SHORT STORIES

No. 611.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending Sept. 15th, 1900.

SARREO.

"WELL, there's niggers an' niggers, some just as good as any white man," said Mr. Thomas Potter as he, the second mate of the island-trading barque *Reconnaisance*, and myself the supercargo, walked her short, stumpy poop one night, "though when I was before the mast I couldn't stand one of 'em bunking too close to me for a long time. But after a while I found out that a Kanaka or a Maori is better than the usual run of the Jack Dog who calls himself a sailor man nowadays.

"Why, I've never seen a native sailor yet as was dirty in his habits—they're too fond o' the water. Look at these Rotumah chaps aboard here—if there's a calm they'll jump overboard and take a swim instead of turning in when it's their watch below. Bah! white sailors ain't worth feeding in this island trade—lazy, dirty, useless brutes; a Kanaka is worth three of any one of 'em. Did you notice that large photograph in my cabin—that one showing a ship's company standing on the main deck?"

"Yes, I did, Mr. Potter."

"Well, that's the crew of the *Fanny Long*, and amongst 'em is a fellow I'm goin' to tell you about—a chap named Sarréo. We had that picture taken in Hobart after we had come back from a whaling cruise. We had been very lucky, and the skipper and owners had all our photographs taken in a group.

"I was second mate, and this Sarréo was one of the boatsteerers. He and I had been shipmates before, once in the old *Meteor* barque, nigger catching for the Fiji planters, and once in a New Bedford sperm whaler, and he had taken a bit of a liking to me, so whenever I got a new ship he generally shipped, too.

"Well, I was tired of whaling; I had two ribs broken on that cruise in the *Fanny Long* by a boat being stove in by a whale. So after I had got my money I walked out of the office, thinking of going to Sydney by the steamboat, when up comes Sarréo.

"'Got your money, Sarréo?' I says.

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"'Yes,' he answers. 'What are you goin' to do now' Mr. Potter?'

"'Going to Sydney to look for another sh'p.'

"'All right,' he says quietly. 'I come, too. I don' want to go whaling any more.'

"Sure enough, when I went on board the steamer, there he was sitting for'ard on his chest, smoking his pipe, an' waiting for me.

"In Sydney there was a fine big lump of a schooner just fitting out for a trading cruise to the Solomon Islands, and I happened to know the skipper, who worked it for me with the owners, and I got the berth of chief mate; and Sarréo, who used to come every day to the place I was staying at to ask me not to forget him, was shipped as an A.B.

"What sort of a looking chap? Well, he was a short, square-built chap, with a chest like a bullock. He was rather darker than a Samoan or a Tahiti man, owing to a seafaring life, and had straight, black hair. He only spoke as a rule when he was spoken to, and kept himself pretty much aloof from the rest of the hands, though he wasn't by any means sulky."

"Where did he hail from?" I inquired.

"Ah, now you're asking, sir. There was a beast of a supercargo—I beg pardon, sir, for forgetting myself—a reg'lar flash, bullying pig of a fellow, with us that trip. He put on as many airs as if he owned the whole blooming Pacific. Well, one day he was straightening up his trade-room, and calls for a couple of hands to help, and the skipper sent Sarréo and another native sailor to him.

"We were then lying at anchor in Marau Sound, in the Solomons, at the time, and the sun was hot enough to cook meat with, and presently the supercargo comes on deck and slings his fat, ugly carcass into a deck chair under the awning and says:

"'That's a smart fellow, that Sarréo, Potter. Where does he come from?'

"Now I didn't know, and said so; so Mr. Supercargo grunts and says that he'd ask him himself. Presently up comes Sarréo and the other native—they were going for'ard for their dinner.

"'Here, I say you,' said the supercargo to Sarréo, touching him on the calf of the leg with his foot as he was passing, 'what island you belong to, eh?'

"Sarréo turned like lightning, and I caught a sight of his face. He had dark, deep-set eyes, and they seemed to spit fire at the fat brute in the chair, and his two brown hands shut tight; but he said nothing, not a blessed word, only looked as if all the rest of his body was turned to stone. He stood like that for about ten seconds or so, then he bent his head close to the other man's face and put his two clenched fists out behind him.

In less than a couple of minutes Sarreo had the supercargo by the throat.

"'Here, Sarréo,' I says, collaring him by one arm, 'what's all these gymnastics? What's the matter?'

"He pushed me aside as if I was a feather, then he straightens himself up sudden, and, lookin' at the supercargo, spits on the deck at his feet.

"'You dog,' he says, 'when we get ashore I will fight you!'

"Warby, that was the supercargo's name, was no cur, whatever else he was, but though he seemed mighty sick when he heard Sarréo call him a dog, he jumped up at once.

"'You beastly Kanaka swine! You're drunk! You've been sneaking a bottle of gin in the trade-room, an' I'll give you a pounding,' he says.

"Then before any one could interfere they were at it, and in less than a couple of minutes Sarréo had the supercargo by the throat, lifted him off his feet, and dashed him down on the poop. He lay there stunned, an' I tell you, mister, I was mighty pleased, for we all hated him for his beastly bullyin' ways, and his foul talk. So none of us rushed at him too violently to pick him up.

"Presently up comes the skipper and orders me to put Sarréo in irons, though I could see he didn't half like doing it. But it had to be done, and I had to do it. However, Sarréo held out his hands to me as quiet as a lamb, and I led him for'ard and told him to keep a stiff upper lip; the captain, I knew, would let him loose again the next morning. He nodded his head quietly and said:

"'All right, Mr. Potter. But when we get ashore I will kill that man.'

"'Why, Sarréo,' I said, 'you mustn't talk like that; you've nearly cracked his skull as it is. Don't you go on that tack, or it'll be worse for you.'

"He nods again.

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"'I know. But I have been looking for that man for more'n five year.'

"'Why, do you know him?'

"'Yes, I know him *now*. When I see him roll up his shirt-sleeve in the trade-room, an' I see some tattoo mark on his arm, I know him.'

"Of course I asked him what the supercargo had done to him, but he wouldn't tell me any more. So, telling one of the hands to give him his pipe and tobacco, I went aft and told the skipper that there seemed to be an old grudge between the two men.

"'Like enough. That fellow Warby is the two ends and bight of a blackguard. He was only appointed to this ship at the last moment, or else I would have kicked against his coming aboard. He's got a bad name.'

"Warby lay in his bunk for the rest of the day, but in the evening he came on deck and said to the skipper roughly:

"'What are you going to do with that nigger?'

"'Keep him in irons for a day or two, I suppose. What more can I do?'

"Warby looked at him for a moment, then he says, with a sneer, that in some ships the captain would have tied such a fell w up and given him six dozen.

"'No doubt,' says the skipper, looking him full in his ugly face, 'no doubt, especially in the sort of ships you've sailed in. But nothing like that is going to happen aboard this boat.'

"The supercargo muttered something under his breath and turned away. Next morning, however, when we were at breakfast, he asked the captain how long he meant to keep Sarréo in irons.

"'Till after breakfast.'

"Warby jumped up in a rage and said that he protested against such a man being given his liberty.

"'Why, he'll murder me,' he says at last with a white look in his face.

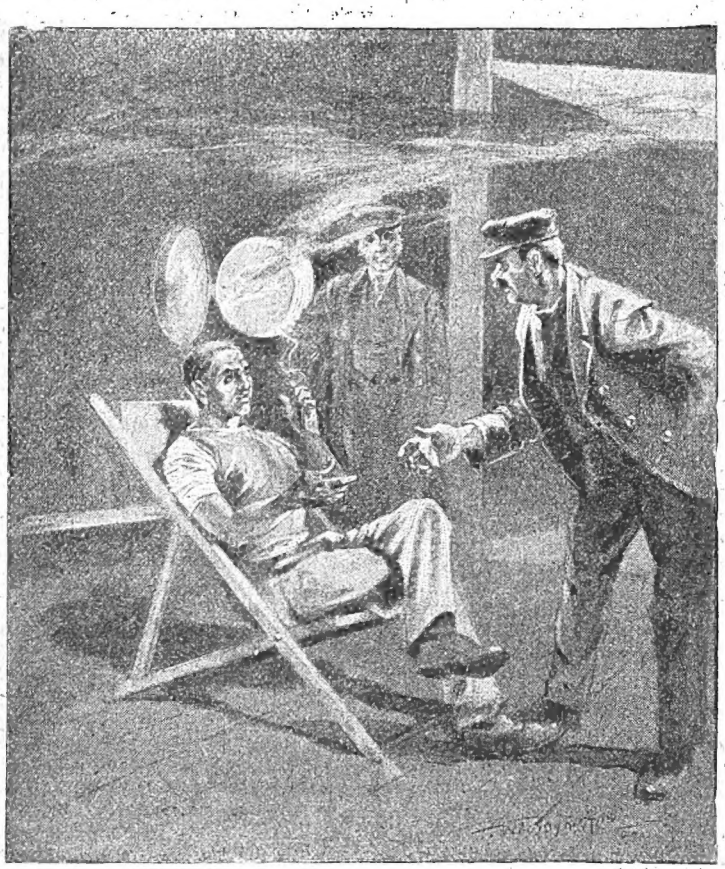
"The skipper laughed.

"'You make too much of the business, Mr. Warby. Why, he is one of the best and quietest men aboard. If you hadn't kicked him and then sworn at him, he wouldn't have tackled you. And I'm not going to keep him in irons—that's flat.'

"After breakfast I went up for'ard to take the irons off Sarréo. He was sitting against the windlass and smoking.

"'Here, Sarréo,' I said, 'I've come to take off your bracelets; but you must promise not to have any more rows w th the supercargo; if you won't promise, then the captain says he'll have to keep you in irons until we get to Fiji, and then send you to jail.'

"He promised, and from the quiet, soft manner in which he spoke I felt sure he was over his burst of passion, and was feeling a bit funky over it. However, he turned to very quietly, and was soon sent ashore with a watering party, he being in charge of the boat, which was manned by seventy native sailors.



Then Sarréo put out his big brown tattoed hand.

"When he came back with the first lot of casks he told me that the bush around the watering-place was full of pigeons. As soon as the captain heard this he said he would go ashore and shoot some, and Mr. Warby said he would like to join him.

"So off they went—skipper, supercargo, and Sarréo and his boat's crew. We on board soon heard the two guns firing, and were smacking our chops at the thought of pigeon stew for supper. I did not expect to see them back until about supper time, as the boat had to tow the casks off to the ship, which lay about half-a-mile from the beach.

"But about four o'clock I saw the boat pushing off in a dickens of a hurry, and then pull like mad for the ship. Knowing that there was no danger from natives at that part of the island, I couldn't make it out out, but in a few minutes the boat dashes up alongside, and looking over the side I saw that Sarréo was sitting beside the captain, in between him and Mr. Warby; his eyes were closed, and I thought he was dead at first.

"We had him lifted up on deck and then carried into the cabin in a brace of shakes, and I saw that he had a bullet wound in his shoulder; the ball had gone clean through. Then the skipper, who was never much of a talker, told me that Mr. Warby had shot the man accidentally. Of course I looked at Warby. His face was very pale, but his eyes met mine without flinching.

"It didn't take the captain long to dress the wound, and half-an-hour later, when I came below again, Sarréo

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I saw the rifle go off and the nigger topple over.

was sitting on a chair down below smoking one of the captain's manilas, and looking as if nothing had happened. He smiled when he saw me and put out his hand.

"'I'm all right, Mr. Potter,' he said; 'not going to die this time.'

"I was just about to ask him how the thing happened when Robertson, that was our skipper's name, called me into his room. He was as solemn as a judge. Closing his cabin door, he said:

"'Sarréo will get over it all right, but the business is an ugly one; to cut it short, I fear that it was no accident, but that Warby tried to murder the poor fellow.'

"Then he told me what had occurred. Leaving the rest of the boat's crew to fill the water casks, they set out to shoot pigeons; Sarréo went with them to pick up and carry the birds. About an hour later they saw a wild boar rush by them. Robertson fired both barrels at it and wounded it, but it didn't stop. Warby had one barrel empty. He at once loaded with ball, and the three men gave chase, Sarréo leading, Warby following him close.

"On reaching some high grass at the river bank Sarréo plunged into it; then, a few seconds later, Robertson heard Warby call out that he saw the animal lying down, and fired. The captain was a short distance behind, but he and Warby reached the spot together, and there, sure enough, lying in the long grass, was the wounded boar, and Sarréo beside it, with the blood pouring from his shoulder. He was sitting up, supporting himself on his left hand.

"The skipper assisted him to his feet, and Warby tried to help, but Sarréo turned on him and reviled him, and said that he (Warby) had tried to murder him. The supercargo said that he had not seen him when he fired, but further talk was cut short by Sarréo going faint through loss of blood, so they carried him to the boat. That was the story so far, and Robertson asked me what I thought of it.

"Now I had been shipmates with Sarréo off and on for a matter of five or six years, and I never knew him to tell a lie; but at the same time I couldn't think Warby would be such a brute as to try and murder the man in cold blood.

"The skipper, however, took a very black view of the matter, and told me that if we met a man-of-war he would put Warby in irons, signal for a boat, and hand him over on a charge of attempted murder. Then we went out into the main cabin and sat down, and Robertson told the steward to call the supercargo.

"Warby came below at once. He gave a quick glance at Sarréo, then at the skipper and myself, and sat down quietly. In less than a minute the captain told him of his suspicions and what he intended doing if we met a man-of-war.

"I thought Warby would bluster and blaspheme in his usual way; but he didn't. He listened in silence. Then he rose and put his hands on the cabin table, and said:

"'Before Heaven, I swear to you both that I am innocent. I did not fire at that man; I did not even see him again after he disappeared into the grass—as Heaven is my judge, I did not. I did mean to take it out of Sarréo for nearly breaking my skull the other day; but then I remembered afterwards that he had cause to hate me, and I was only waiting for a chance to ask him to make it up.

"'Sarréo, I did you a bad turn a long time ago; but I'm sorry for it now—I have been sorry for it ever since. But I did not know where to find you, and I would not have known you yesterday if you hadn't looked into my face and spoken. It's ten years since that day, Sarréo.'

"The wounded man looked up searching-like into Warby's face all the time he was speaking; then his big black eyes drooped again, but he made no answer. So then Warby went on again, talking to the lot of us.

"'I was supercargo on the *Manola* brig, and Sarréo here was one of the hands. One day, in Apia harbour, a bag of dollars was stolen out of my cabin. The steward next morning said he had seen Sarréo ashore at one of the dance houses spending money very freely. The captain and I burst open his chest, and we found about twenty Mexican dollars among his clothes. Now, in the bag which had been stolen there were nearly five hundred Mexican dollars.

"'Sarréo swore he had not stolen the money, and that all the money he had spent on shore was five dollars, which he had brought with him from San Francisco. But the skipper and I believed he was the thief, and to make him own up and tell us where the rest of the

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dollars were, we flogged him. Then we put him in irons and kept him in irons for a week. He still swore he had not taken the money, and I, believing he was lying, gave him another thrashing on my own account.

"'That night he got overboard and swam ashore, and we gave the money up for lost. Well, about a week after this, when the steward was ashore, the mate and I decided to make a thorough search of *his* cabin. We found nothing there, but we did in the pantry—we found the missing bag of dollars, all but the twenty which he had put into Sarréo's chest—stowed away in the bottom of half a barrel of flour.'

"As soon as Sarréo heard this, the poor fellow almost began to cry, and said:

"'I told you, Mr. Warby, I did not steal that money.'

"'No, Sarréo, I know you didn't—that is, I knew it when the steward owned up to stealing it; and told us afterward that he took twenty dollars out of the bag, and, seeing your chest lying open in the deck-house, he slipped in when no one was about and put the money among the clothes at the bottom.'

"Sarréo sighed, pleased-like, and then his brown face lit up.

"The big supercargo came a bit nearer to him, and then held out his hand.

"'Look here, Sarréo, the day before yesterday I was wrong, but you got my blood up, and I am sorry, very sorry, for the wrong I did you on board the *Manola*; but believe me, Sarréo, I did not fire at you.'

"Sarréo's eyes seemed to look right through the white man; then they turned towards the skipper and me.

"'*I* believe you, Mr. Warby,' said the skipper, coming aft and shaking hands with the supercargo.

"And I believed him, too, for he looked terrible distressed and cut up, so I shook hands with him, too.

"Then Sarréo put out his big brown tattoed hand.

"'And me, too, Mr. Warby.'

"The supercargo pressed it gently, so as not to hurt Sarréo's shoulder, then he almost ran past us on deck.

"Well, from that time out, that man changed, and he looked after Sarréo all the time he was laid up as if he had been his own brother instead of a Kanaka chap before the mast.

"After leaving Marau Sound we stood to the northward, being bound to Bougainville Island. It took us more than a month to get there, and by that time Sarréo was as well and strong as ever he was; and me and the skipper had got quite chummy with the supercargo, for we found out that he had a lot of good points about him.

"Just when we were about to brace up to round Bouka Island, and being about three miles off the land, we sighted part of the hull of a vessel ashore on the beach of a small bay. We stood in for a mile or so and saw that there was a native village at the head of the bay, and the vessel was a schooner of about a hundred tons. There were no signs of any boats, and she seemed to be stripped of both running and standing gear.

"We manned and armed two boats, one, with Mr. Warby in charge, being the landing-party, and the other as a covering boat in case the natives attacked. I had charge of the second boat and had four white sailors; Mr. Warby had Sarréo and four other natives. The skipper told us to have a good look at the vessel, then try and learn what the natives on shore had to say about her, and then come off and report.

"We pulled right in to the wreck as close as we could get, for it was low tide. Then Warby and I got out and walked over to it. We found that she was stripped of everything of value, even the chain-plates having been cut out, the decks were torn up and partly burnt, and the anchors and cables were gone; in fact, she was nothing but a shell.

"'Been looted by the niggers,' I said to Warby. 'Hope the poor chaps that manned her got away in the boat; better for 'em to drown than be eaten by these beggars about here.'

"We then walked back to the boats and pulled over to the village, which was about eight hundred yards away, Warby's boat, of course, going first. About thirty or forty natives came down to the water's edge and waited. They were all armed with bows, spears, and clubs, but seemed friendly.

"However, Warby jumped boldly out on to the beach, and telling his crew to keep her afloat in case he had to run for it, he went up to the crowd of niggers and shook hands with some of them, I and my men in the covering boat keeping our rifles out of view but quite ready.

"In about five minutes he sang out to me that it was all right. The vessel, the natives said, had parted her cables, gone ashore, and bilged on the reef in the night; and the hands, being too frightened to come ashore, had gone away next morning in two boats. Then he told me to wait a few minutes as he was going to the chief's house to look at the copper and other gear that the natives had taken from the schooner, and very likely he would buy it.

"We lay there, backed stern on to the beach, for about five minutes, looking at the house into which he had gone with the natives. Suddenly we saw him burst out of the house and fall on his knees, trying to draw his revolver, but in another moment he was being tomahawked and clubbed by a mob of yelling savages. Poor chap, he must have died very quickly.

"We opened fire at once, and they disappeared like magic, and then from every bush, tree, and rock they began firing at us in the boats with both muskets and arrows. One of my men was hit, and then, before I could stop him, Sarréo had jumped out of his boat and was running up the beach, rifle in hand, to where Mr. Warby's body was lying.

"He got there, I think, without being hit, just as a big native ran at him with a tomahawk. He hadn't time to put his Snider to his shoulder; but that nigger gave his last jump anyway, for I saw the rifle go off and the nigger topple over. In another five seconds he had lifted the supercargo up, thrown him over his left shoulder, and was running down to the boats.

"By this time I and two of my crew had jumped out of the boat and ran to meet him, firing as we went. We had just reached him when down he went on to his face in the sand—a bullet had smashed his hip.

"Dropping our rifles, we picked him and Mr. Warby's body up, and luckily managed to tumble into the boat together and push off, covered by the fire from the ship, which carried two six-pounders.

"Sarréo lived two days—he died the same morning that we were getting ready to take Mr. Warby's body ashore to bury on a little island between Bouka and Bougainville. So we made only one trip ashore. Poor chap! He was a good, simple heart, and almost his last words were that he 'was glad Mr. Warby wasn't eaten.'

* * * * *

"Ah, as you say, sir, the South Seas ain't no place for a white man. Good-night." LOUIS BECKE.

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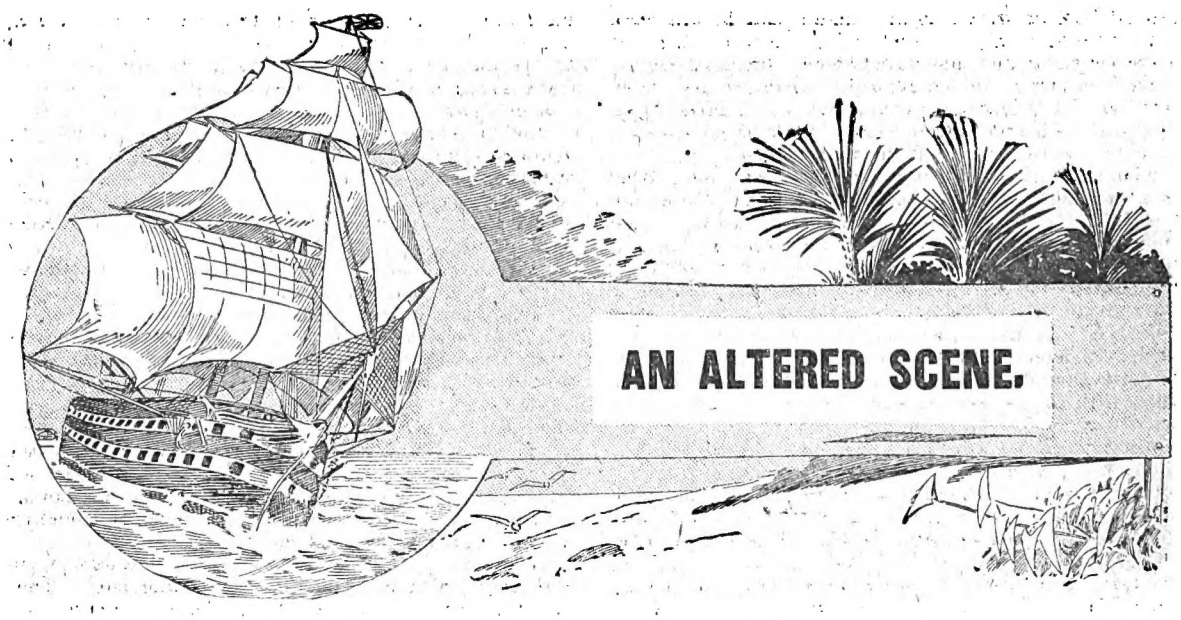

AN ALTERED SCENE.

JAMES DUNN, lessee and manager of the Pearl Theatre, sat back in his chair and surveyed his reflection in the mirror over the mantelpiece.

"It's no good, James Dunn," he remarked, shaking his pencil at the image in the glass, which naturally did likewise. "The plain truth is that you are too old for the part—and 'part' in this instance signifies a multitude of duties. It makes you wince to confess that you are on the wrong side of fifty and not so able-bodied as you used to be, but you've got to confess it!"

He shook his head at his reflection and nibbled the end of his pencil for a few moments.

"Yes," he sighed, "I must have some help. I am no longer able to be lessee, stage manager, actor, and general help. In a little place like this, the public are not so exacting as in a big town, but when the pit and gallery begin to chaff you because a twinge of rheumatism makes you draw up your leg when you are lying dead on the stage—when they tell you that you can't make up young enough for the gallant knight, then it's time to alter things or the show won't pay. I must get a young fellow to do some of the business.

"I'll insert a judicious advertisement. What shall I say? 'Wanted, a young man that can do everything' would about suit, but that's a trifle broad. But I've always been lucky enough to fall on my feet, so I suppose I shall get through it all right. Oh, come in!"

The interruption appeared inopportune, but the letter which was handed to him could not have come at a better moment.

"Is he waiting?" he asked the boy. "Yes? Well, show him in."

A young man about twenty-seven was shown in a couple of minutes later. Tall, well-built; a face that, in respect of good looks, would not have taken a high place, but which showed intelligence and will. He was clean-shaven, and not over well-dressed. The most noticeable thing about him was that from his dark eyes there came occasionally a gleam of light which seemed to thrill and fascinate you.

"So you are Jack Dawson's son, eh? And you wish to know if I can help you into a situation? My boy, honestly you look as if you wanted one! Sit down there and talk."

Arthur Dawson obeyed, but he did not do all the talking; and in the end he was engaged as assistant to the lessee and manager of the Pearl Theatre.

"I fancy you'll succeed," said Dunn. "You'll have to do something of everything, and mind, you must understudy the men's parts so that you can take up one or other if any actor falls ill!"

Dawson entered upon his duties at once. His coming was viewed with considerable disfavour by the chief actors and actresses, but his kindly, unobtrusive manner, his genial smile and willingness to be useful, and especially the expression in his eyes soon changed all that, and within a week he had acquired as firm a position as many another would have gained in a year.

He showed ability, too. He seemed to be able to learn the lines without difficulty, and he adapted himself with facility to all the small parts which fell to his lot—soldier, courtier, walking gentleman, policeman, footman, and what not, all came easy to him.

The leading actor, who sometimes was not so ready with his part as he ought to have been, accepted Dawson's "prompt" with condescension; the leading lady bestowed a soft glance upon him as a reward for little attentions paid to her comfort, and the second lady—who had none of the proud, haughty bearing of her sister actress—thanked him very sweetly for what he did.

Dawson had not been in his post for more than a month when a disturbing element arose. The star, as the leading man was generally called, began to think that Dawson was seeking an opportunity to show that he could play the part which he was understudying better than the star himself; and although his pride revolted at the thought that the young fellow could ever be as good an actor as he, yet he felt an occasional qualm of uneasiness, and turned against Dawson.

Miss Maggie Adair, the leading lady, continued to

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reward Dawson with a friendly smile until he answered that smile with one of those thrilling glances; then she drew herself up and murmured about "presumption."

Dawson merely smiled cynically when he discovered that he had offended Mason; but when Miss Adair returned his glance with a cold stare and passed him without a word, he started and turned pale.

There was one person in the company who had noticed this incident between the stage manager, as he was now generally styled, and the leading lady, and it was not the only thing she had noticed. Florence Graves, the second lady, had observed that Dawson was more solicitous about Miss Adair than about anyone else in the theatre; it could not exactly be said that he went out of his way and showed undue favouritism, but her keen eyes detected a fact which seems to have escaped the attention of everyone else, even Miss Adair herself. And when she awoke to this knowledge, Florence Graves went home and wept, asking herself why some despise a love which others crave and cannot get.

"Can't quite make out what has come over Dawson lately," mused Mr. James Dunn one evening, as he sipped at the contents of a glass just previous to going to bed. "He does the work all right, but he seems to be quieter than when he began. I suppose it was the newness of the thing that made him brighter at first, and now he has settled down to it, he goes about it in a more matter-of-fact way. Yes, that must be it. His father was just as cool, and it used to be said of him that it would take a strong charge of gunpowder to wake him up. On the same principle, the son would require nitro-glycerine!" and with a smile, the lessee went to bed satisfied.

As the weeks passed by, matters developed. Dawson's kindliness to everyone with whom he came in contact increased rather than diminished; he had a pleasant smile for the old and the weak, he would talk pleasantly to the children who played outside the theatre, and seemed to carry a sunbeam with him wherever he went, yet his face was always grave.

Only two people paid any heed to this; the lessee believed it to be the reflection of a cold nature and forgot that it did not accord with Dawson's warm heart, while Florence Graves felt a pang every time she saw it and remembered that it was the indication of unrequited love.

Miss Adair, to demonstrate her appreciation of Dawson's presumption, bestowed her smiles upon Mason, with whom in the ordinary course of business, she had to act the part of wife or sweetheart.

She would probably have been unable to explain why she had decided to "punish" Dawson by bestowing her favours upon a man for whom it had not occurred to her previously to entertain any affection; hers was one of those natures which act perversely at the slightest provocation and land the woman into the slough of misery unless they are awakened by some act of devotion or sacrifice—or by jealousy! For when the prize seems to be going to another, they desire to have it and are wakened to a knowledge of their real feelings.

Mr. Mason showed his appreciation of the course of events by returning Miss Adair's smiles and by making advances on his side, and in two or three weeks it came to be understood by the company generally that the couple would become man and wife. And in the meantime Dawson's face became even more grave, and Florence betrayed more nervous irritation in a week than she had previously shown in a whole year.

Whether Dawson was really waiting for his chance to take the place of the star for a night or two and prove his ability or not, the opportunity was long in coming. Mason was in the best of health apparently and was in his place every evening, although to the keen eye of the stage manager he was not always in good form.

A new play was produced. One of the chief incidents of the piece was a dialogue between two sisters; the younger alternately pleaded with and upbraided the other for her conduct towards a man whom she regarded as a traitor to a man with whom he pretended to be on good terms. The first man was envious of the other's position and of the fact that he was winning the affection of the elder sister; he was trying to supplant his "friend" in both ways—that was the notion that possessed the mind of the elder sister.

The younger sister believed that the elder was entirely mistaken and was giving her love to a man who was not worthy of it.

The part of the supposedly treacherous friend was the chief male *rôle* in the play and was naturally assigned to Mason. The female parts were both good, which rather displeased Miss Adair; she had her choice and fixed upon the younger sister, but the thing did not go well in rehearsal and the parts were changed, Florence Graves becoming the younger sister.

The author had to add more "fat" to the part of the elder sister in order to gratify the leading lady. Then the piece went well and Mr. Dunn looked forward to a successful and lengthy run.

The play was a decided success, but its result was not satisfactory to the leading lady and gentleman; for the critics praised Florence Graves more than anyone else.

They said that her acting was real, that she played her part to perfection—especially in the dialogue, and that she was destined to have a career.

Miss Adair blamed herself for not having kept to that part and she began to experience a feeling towards Miss Graves that threatened to develop into hate; this feeling of jealousy, for that was its real character, deepened when she observed that Florence made open advances to Arthur Dawson—unmaidenly advances, as she styled them. True, she had snubbed the man herself, but she did not like the turn that things were taking; Florence was deliberately trying to win Dawson, and he seemed willing to yield.

Miss Adair's bearing towards Dawson became more frigid than ever, but he never varied in his manner towards her—always the same coldly polite and deferential style, always ready to do anything that might be required.

"I think it is time that two members of this company were sent about their business," she remarked one evening to Mason, as he was escorting her home as usual. "Neither Mr. Dawson nor Miss Graves ought to be allowed to remain; the fact is, they are trying to oust us both! I have believed that of Dawson for a long time, and now he and this girl are too friendly and are working together."

It was a spiteful speech, and to tell the truth Miss Adair was half ashamed of it as soon as it was finished. But she had been particularly irritated that evening.

"Confound him!" said Mason. "I half believe that he worked those notices for her and left us in the background."

The vehemence of his tone startled her—scared her almost. And when she had left him she began to think very seriously. She had to admit that her remark had been almost on a level with his in point of spleen.

Maggie Adair felt that the fates were working for

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Dawson and Miss Graves when, on the following evening, the leading actor did not put in an appearance and the young stage manager, as understudy, took his place.

Dawson threw his whole soul into the part, and the interview between Miss Adair and himself, where she called him a traitor and he indignantly protested, brought down the house. At the end of that act he was called before the curtain, a special honour that had not been accorded to Mason. His soliloquy after the girl's retirement from the scene, in which he spoke of his love for her, was voted grand.

In the next act the dialogue between the two sisters took place; it was enacted as it had never been before and never was afterwards. Had the author been in the house and heard the younger sister's impassioned speech he would have been as surprised as were Miss Adair and the rest of the company.

The elder sister completely lost her cues; she did not recognise the lines, and no wonder. Florence spoke as her heart dictated; the part came natural to her, it was all so much like the drama that had been played in private for months. She spoke of the worthiness of the "traitor," and of the unworthiness of his friend; she pointed out that the one loved her with all the strength of his being, loved her truly and honourably, while the other cared nothing for her in reality and would only marry her because he could make money out of her ability.

Then she went on with a passionate declaration—which was foreign to the part—that she had set herself deliberately to make love to the "traitor" in the most open manner in an attempt to bring her elder sister to her senses.

"I love him!" she concluded in a low tone that could be heard only by a few of the audience. "But I know that he loves you, and I have done this unwomanly thing, I have sacrificed my self-respect, my whole self, to make him happy. I believe you are good at heart; I know that he could be happy only with you. I feel that if you are awakened to this fact, you cannot but love him. Will you wreck his life and your own?"

By this time it had dawned upon both Dawson and the lessee that there was something wrong and they dropped the curtain. As it fell, Florence Graves sank to the floor in a swoon.

Luckily that was her last appearance for the evening. In the final scene, where the elder sister acknowledges her error and asks forgiveness of the "traitor" there was another piece of good acting, and the audience went away highly delighted with the play.

Arthur Dawson escorted the leading lady to her home that night. The next day there were two items of news for them; Mason had died suddenly in a fit, the cause of which was a clot of blood on the brain due to hard drinking, and Miss Graves was suffering from a severe attack of brain fever.

Florence was ill for a long time and never returned to the boards; she has a good typewriting business, with a staff of lady clerks, from which she derives a comfortable income.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Dawson are still acting the parts of leading actor and actress at the Pearl Theatre; they occasionally perform elsewhere, but they are warm favourites with the patrons of the old house, and cling to it.

Dawson is now partner in the business, and it is quite on the cards that when Mr. Dunn retires from the stage of life he will leave all his properties to the son of his old friend.

GEORGE KNIGHT.

HAVE YOU GOT THAT TEN POUND NOTE?

Thirty-five Ten-Pound Notes Going Begging!

YOU CAN HAVE ONE FOR THE ASKING!

THE latest scheme of *PEARSON'S WEEKLY* is unquestionably one of the most astounding that has yet been placed before the readers of any paper. Broadly speaking, the Editor places you in the position of **getting ten pounds by simply asking for it.**

The idea is this:

Thirty men are wandering about the country, each with a sealed envelope in his pocket. Each envelope is of linen, tough and unbreakable. No one but the Editor knows *exactly* what is in those envelopes, so the contents cannot be forged. Each contains, as a matter of fact, a letter signed by the Editor authorising the first person who asks for it to the sum of £10.

HOW YOU SEE HOW YOU CAN GET £10 FOR ASKING.

We don't expect you to rush out at once and ask every man you meet if he has the envelope. That would be foolish—a mere waste of time. Moreover, you would probably get a rebuff.

What you should do is to quietly watch everyone you come in contact with. If you think the man you see is likely to be one of these men, you can, in an inoffensive and quiet manner, simply say: "By-the-way, have you seen this scheme?" and show him this page. If he is *not* one of the £10 gentlemen he will say he hasn't seen the scheme, and will be interested, and thank you for putting the chance of making £10 in his way. If he *is* one of the Ten Pounders he will quietly and unostentatiously take out his pocket-book and hand you the sealed letter.

This you will at once post to us in a registered envelope, and **WE WILL SEND YOU A CHEQUE FOR £10.**

THE TEN-POUNDERS

Will travel by the train. Will wear ordinary clothes. Will stop at all sorts of hotels. Will smoke and drink. Will attend places of entertainment. Will look in shop windows. Will loaf about the beach or parks.

In fact, will behave just like ordinary mortals.

They will wander about our big cities, they will alight from trains at wayside stations, and walk about villages and small towns, and they will altogether give every opportunity to people to get those £10 notes.

If you are at this moment in the train one of these men ***may be opposite you, or sitting next to you!***

Just casually show him this page. If he's one of them you'll get £10.

You will at once say: "Oh, yes, but I might ask a thousand people, and yet not get the right one."

Of course you might; but then, you might ask three, and the third might be the right one. Don't think because you simply move in a limited circle during your day's work that you're not likely to see the right man. All these men will intrude themselves unostentatiously into people's daily lives. They may converse with you on any subjects but those which will give you a hint regarding the ten pounds, unless you broach such subject yourself.

Don't think that you have to ask everyone you meet. Just show the page to a fellow passenger by boat or train, to a chance acquaintance on the beach or on the parade. No harm is done if he's not the right chap. You can both just laugh over it.

ALREADY FOUR £10 NOTES HAVE BEEN CLAIMED.

Two have gone to London, one to Southend, and one to Norwich.

Full details appear in *Pearson's Weekly*.

Every day the Ten Pounders will write to the Editor and tell their experiences—where they had breakfast, where they lunched, whom they sat next to, what those people were like, what they were talking about, and what they ate—in fact, will say just exactly what they have been doing every day. Some of this information will be published in the ***Daily Express*** every day and in ***Pearson's Weekly*** every week, so you will know just how things are going along.

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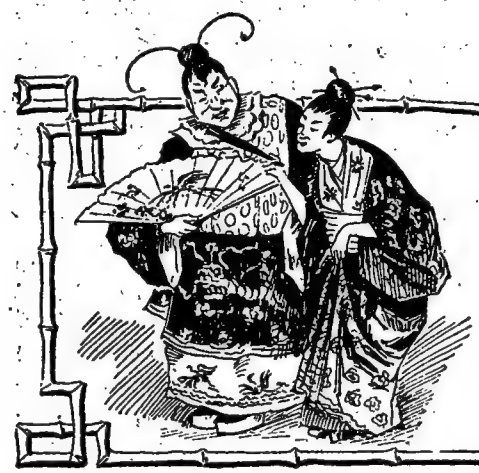

Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXIII.—He Tunes His Own Piano and Thereby Saves £5.

It was after dinner, but instead of sitting down to his evening paper and cigar Mr. Bowser was prowling round the lower part of the house. Mrs. Bowser realised that "something was up," but she maintained silence until at length he paused before her and said:

"Last night while you were playing the piano I noticed that it was sadly out of tune. You must have heard some of the keys make a sort of ur-ur-ur as you struck them."

"I heard nothing of the sort!" promptly replied Mrs. Bowser as a dim idea of what he was up to flashed across her mind. "The piano was tuned only a month ago, and there are no ur-ur-urs about it."

"But I insist that there are," continued Mr. Bowser. "I have a keen ear, and I say that no less than seven different keys had the sound of an egg beater at work. It may have been tuned a month ago, but by whom?"

"By a first class tuner."

"That is, he of course claimed to be first class and charged you five shillings, but how do you know that he wasn't a carpenter or blacksmith? There's a piano which cost me £50. It is going to rack and ruin for the need of a little overhauling. To get a competent man up here will cost £5 whereas——"

"Whereas you can do the work in an hour yourself," finished Mrs. Bowser. "Well, now, you let that piano alone! You know no more about the works of a piano than I do about the kitchen of the Tsar of Russia. If there's anything to be done, I'll get a man up here."

"Madam," said Mr. Bowser as he stood before her with his hands clasped underneath his coat-tails, "there is an ur-ur-ur to that piano. It is out of repair; it is going to ruin. I can overhaul it in one hour and save £5. It will be a pleasure for me to do the work, and I also feel it is my duty to save the money which would have to be otherwise paid out. I shall proceed to tune."

"But you'll only destroy it. If you feel that you must tinker away at something, why don't you take the lawn-mower, the gasmeter or that old airgun in the garret."

"I do not ask you to remain in the room during the tuning process. You can put on your hat and go for a walk, or you can go up to your room and read a novel. When I have restored the tone to its original volume and sweetness, I will call you."

"But I beg you to—to——"

Mr. Bowser waved his hand to signify that nothing on the face of the earth could turn him aside, and as Mrs. Bowser went upstairs with tears in her eyes he got out his tool box and peeled off his coat and jacket to begin work. He met with an adventure at the very outset. He wanted room to work on all sides of the piano, and he therefore got behind it to push it out into the middle of the floor. He was heaving away with his shoulder against the case when his foot slipped on the carpet and he went down and rolled over with the weight of an elephant. He fell up against a chair and knocked that over, and he was still lying on his back when Mrs. Bowser came half-way down the stairs to call out:

"I thought the walls were falling in! What are you doing on your back on the floor!"

"I wanted to see the underside of the piano," he replied as he got up. "Should I find myself in need of your assistance I will call you."

As tools for piano tuning Mr. Bowser had a hammer, a hatchet, a tack-puller, a corkscrew, a screwdriver and a monkey-wrench. As he folded back the cover he saw the inside of a piano for the first time in his life. He had taken only one glance when he walked to the foot of the stairs and called to Mrs. Bowser:

"No wonder there was an ur-ur-ur when you hit some of the keys! What d'you 'spose your first class piano-tuner left among the wires?"

"He couldn't have left any of his tools?" she queried.

"No tools, but half-a-dozen strips of red flannel. He even wove them in among the strings. That's probably where my missing flannel shirt went to. He was probably some man from a woollen mill."

"Why, those strips are always put in," protested Mrs. Bowser. "I think the idea is to soften the sound."

"Well, I don't. I think the idea is to attract rats and mice, and out they come."

When Mr. Bowser finished pulling out the "rags," he very quickly discovered the method of tightening up the strings. With one hand he fitted the monkey-wrench to turn the keys, and with the other he started a tum-tum-tum on the keys, as he had once or twice seen a regular tuner do. He couldn't exactly decide

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whether all the strings had to be tightened or loosened and so he took the middle course and tightened and loosened half. The effect wasn't exactly magical; it was worse. Some of the keys piped and sobbed, and there were others which produced sounds as of a saw trying to eat its way into a crowbar.

"Good gracious! What are you doing now?" called Mrs. Bowser after three or four minutes.

"The girl I left behind me."

"Saving a piano from wreck and ruin," replied Mr. Bowser as two chills tried to gallop up his spine at the same time.

He hadn't quite hit it. He grudgingly admitted the fact to himself and then began anew. In a dim, uncertain way he seemed to remember something about "pitch" in connection with tuning. He couldn't possibly recall whether it was high pitch, low pitch or half-and half pitch, but he wasn't the man to hesitate. He began humming the air of "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and keeping up the tum-tum on the keys.

After a while he found a sound to agree with his hum, and he took that for a rallying point. It was what he called a so-so pitch, and after half an hour of playing up and playing down he got three keys which appeared to agree that some sort of a girl had been left behind somebody. The other strings were obstinate. They wanted to play "Ta-ra-ra," "The Sweet By and By," or "Linger Longer Lucy," and every five minutes Mrs. Bowser kept calling down to know if a strange cat had got into the house or if Mr. Bowser had got an attack of colic. He finally refused to answer her, but with teeth shut hard and a glare in his eyes he started out to bring those strings into harmony or break up the whole thing. He tightened ten, one after another, until they set up a humming, and then he mopped his brow and started to tum-tum the keys.

There were ten sounds to bring out the gooseflesh, but scarcely had the first shudder passed over Mr. Bowser when the wires began to snap. The end of the first one flicked his ear, the second one curled his hair and the third just brushed his chin.

He was moving away when four went at once, and one of them had business with his nose. Mrs. Bowser heard a yell and a sit down, and she came flying down stairs to find Mr. Bowser sitting against the wall with his nose in his hand. It was bleeding like a beer barrel with the bung out, and the skin had been peeled from end to base. His eyes were also weeping large tears, and his bald head had a welt across it.

"Well, you've tuned the piano!" said Mrs. Bowser as she looked down upon him.

"Who—who threw a cat in my face?" he asked as he realised her presence.

"It's a wonder you didn't say I did," she answered, "and then go and threaten a separation and all that. It was one of the wires that struck you, and you'll want court plaster on that nose for a month."

"Wo-man—wo——" he began, but she stopped him with a gesture, and said:

"It will cost several pounds to have that piano righted, but it shall be done to-morrow! You've got to the end of your tune, and now go upstairs and let me see how nearly killed you are!"

Mr. Bowser obeyed without a protest. More than that, he never said a word while she was crisscrossing his nose with six strips of plaster.

It was only after he was in bed that he growled under his breath:

"It was a put up job to assassinate me, and you bet your life I'll make it cost somebody mighty dear!"

M. Quad.

Next week: He Sets Out to Do a Little Reforming.

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Promotion by Luck.

DURING a residence of some years in Paris I became acquainted with about a dozen members of the detective force, but only on one occasion did I ever get a story from one of them.

I suppose that was my fault; I am over-modest by nature, and did not like to ask them about their business, but I did summon up a little more courage than usual while talking with a detective outside a prominent café one cool evening in early summer.

"I say," I exclaimed, as though the thought had just struck me, "I have known you for a long time, yet you have never told me a story about any of the cases on which you have been engaged!"

Then I stopped, reddened, and wished I had not spoken. I thought he would regard it as impudence.

To my relief he laughed good-humouredly.

"Oh, I'll tell you one, if you like!" he replied. "I'll tell you about one of my earliest cases; it brought me promotion, but it was promotion by luck and not by merit."

Then he told the story, which I reproduce as nearly as possible in his own words. I have always regarded the affair as characteristically French.

"One afternoon, Dr. Berton heard a carriage stop before the door of his house in the Rue de Turenne, and curiosity prompted him to take a furtive glance from the corner of the window. It was a rather elegant affair; not a private carriage, he surmised, but that did not go for much. The hirer must be a person of wealth, and many exalted people, living in spacious flats, do not trouble to keep their own carriages.

"He saw two persons alight from the carriage and ascend the steps—a man and woman of middle age—while the third occupant, a young woman, remained in the conveyance.

"The doctor was a young man trying to work up a good practice and he felt greatly pleased; this visit would add to his reputation in the neighbourhood, and some recommendations among the upper circles. He wondered how he had contrived to attract attention, and came to the conclusion that it was through an article of his in a medical journal.

"In a few moments the lady was ushered into his presence; he wondered why the gentleman had not come with her, but he soon received an explanation.

"'Dr. Berton,' said the lady after the usual formal greeting, 'I wish to consult you on a matter of some importance and delicacy. I understand that you are a specialist in nervous complaints and mental disorders.'

"The doctor bowed; he was not aware that he had gained any repute in such complaints, but believed that he was as well able to treat them as the majority of medical men in Paris. He was not going to throw away a good chance.

"'I am the Baroness de Sollen,' continued the lady, 'and I wish to consult you about my husband. I have induced him to stay in the waiting-room until I have spoken to you. Oh, I am so distressed, and I hardly like to speak on this subject! I may fully rely on your professional confidence?'

"'Certainly, Madame!'

"The doctor was flattered; he did not know the Baroness, nor had the name occurred to him, but that was not an important detail. There were many titled people in Paris of German descent; their titles were German, although they were now French at heart. Quite close to his house was the Boulevard de Haussmann—that name was German enough!

"'My husband has been living at a high rate during the past year or so,' continued the lady in a low tone. 'I will not enter into particulars, but he has a kind of mania just now for jewellery and—er, actresses. The latest instance is that he wishes to purchase diamonds to the value of £2,000! It cannot possibly go on, we shall be ruined! I wish you to examine him and pronounce an opinion. He is suffering from an attack of some kind just now, and I have taken advantage of this to bring him here under the impression that you will hand him the money to pay for the gems. I am sure I do not really know how I have succeeded in deceiving him to that extent; perhaps he thinks I have

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brought him to his bankers. But he is here, and you will see him?'

"'Certainly!'

"'Then I will go to him and tell him to come in here,' said the lady, before the medical gentleman had time to say more. 'No,' she continued, anticipating what he was about to say, 'I must not be present at the interview. I will remain in the waiting-room. I will fetch him; your servant could not induce him to move, I am convinced of that. I will see you afterwards.'

"As the Baron entered, the doctor ran his eye swiftly over him; but he did not appear quite on a level with his wife, his bearing was not so suggestive of the aristocrat. Dr. Berton concluded that this was one of the results of his errac ic conduct during the last year or so.

"'Good morning,' said the doctor; he was on the point of addressing his visitor by his title, when he remembered that the patient might fancy he was coming incognito; at any rate, even at the risk of being thought impolite, he suppressed the title.

"'Good morning,' replied the visitor affably.

"The medical gentleman took out his watch and approached the patient.

"'Let me feel your pulse,' he requested. 'Keep quite calm.'

"'What the——'

"'Pray be calm!' urged the doctor. 'I merely wish to take note of your pulse. You might put out your tongue at the same time!'

"'Oh, come! I am not here to be examined,' protested the patient, 'I want the money for those diamonds. You know!'

"'H'm!' murmured Berton. 'I fancy this is rather a serious case; he seems to be suffering from mental derangement.'

"Then he continued aloud:

"'Yes, yes! We will talk of that presently; I wish to make a brief examination. Let me feel your pulse.'

"He caught hold of the other's wrist, but the visitor wrenched himself free and sprang to his feet.

"'What is all this nonsense about?' he shouted, his face reddening with annoyance. 'I came here for £2,000, the price of those diamonds.'

"Dr. Berton stepped back in dismay and placed his hand on the bell. The Baron was getting violent, and he began to fear that he had to deal with a maniac.

"'My dear Baron de Sollen,' said the doctor soothingly, 'I understand your case perfectly, and I beg of you to be calm. In the course of a few days I will relieve you from this attack. Never mind about the money; just take your seat again——'

"'Baron de Sollen!' shouted the visitor excitedly. 'Are you mad? I'm not the Baron! I am a jeweller, and I want the money for the diamonds which the Baroness brought here for your approval! You are robbing me!'

"Berton rang the bell to summon assistance. When the man-servant arrived, Berton and he forced the visitor into a chair.

"Berton had now come to the conclusion that something was wrong, so he asked his patient to explain. The man's story may be summed up in a few lines. His name was Jacques Baudet and he was a jeweller on the Boulevard des Ca ucins. On the previous day the Baroness de Sollen called at his shop in company with a young woman, and stated that she was one of the organisers of a charity lottery. She had been commissioned to select the chief prizes, and the first prize was to be a set of diamonds or something of that kind, in order to attract the wealthy classes and induce them to purchase a large number of tickets. She finally selected a magnificent diamond necklace, and had asked him to reserve it for a day until she had had an opportunity of speaking to Dr. Berton, who was at the head of the committee.

"On this particular day she had called again in her carriage and had asked him to go with her to Dr. Berton's residence, taking the necklace with him, so that Berton might finally decide. He had consented. When in the waiting-room, she had asked him for the necklace so that she might show it to Berton, and by her influence induce him to consent to the purchase. To this he had agreed.

"On returning to the waiting-room, she had said that Berton had the necklace and if he, the jeweller, went into the consulting room, the doctor would buy it and give him the money, but might want to beat down the price a little, to which she advised him not to agree. She would remain in the waiting-room, and leave him and the doctor to settle the matter together.

"'And now,' said the unsuspecting jeweller, 'give me back my diamonds, for it seems that the Baroness has been playing a joke on me for some reason or other.'

"'But I haven't seen the diamonds!' exclaimed the doctor.

"Then the truth burst upon both of them. Berton uttered an exclamation of rage and made a rush for the waiting-room, followed by the jeweller. As they both now anticipated, the Baroness was gone and her carriage had disappeared.

"It would be useless to attempt to describe the feelings of both doctor and jeweller at having allowed themselves to be duped in that way.

"Now comes the personal element, and it shows how strange is the truth and what a man will do to win the girl he loves.

"In the midst of the hubbub, a detective called upon the doctor and requested his attendance and that of the jeweller at the nearest police station. This was a new turn, and both gentlemen looked at the officer in amazement, wondering whether the wily Baroness had further complicated matters by bringing some trumped-up charge against them.

"The detective declined to satisfy their curiosity and requested their immediate compliance; he only knew one side of the affair—precisely that which was unknown to the two men—and he wished to observe how they behaved, as a clue to the truth.

"His attention had been attracted, not far from the station, by an open carriage, driven by a young man, in which were two ladies, both appealing to someone to stop the horses, as the driver was taking them in the wrong direction and would not obey their orders.

"He called to the driver to stop, but his command not being obeyed, he succeeded in climbing to the seat beside the driver at some personal risk. The young fellow insisted that he was driving the two ladies to the police station, as they had committed a robbery and had stolen a valuable diamond necklace. In the end, the detective decided that they had all better go the police-station and sift the matter.

"Of course, there was a great to-do. The ladies indignantly denied that they had committed any robbery and voluntarily agreed that they should be searched; nothing was found on them. The young man made an explanation which seemed too wild for belief.

"He had been an assistant to M. Baudet, but having had the presumption to aspire to become the husband

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of the jeweller's daughter, he had been dismissed. He had been forced to take up the situation of a coachman in the employ of a jobmaster. He and the girl were in love with each other and still met secretly.

"The girl had told him on the previous evening what her father had said at home about the probable purchase of the diamond necklace. He had not taken much notice of it, but in the morning she had purposely met him to implore his help; she had dreamt that something unfortunate was about to occur to her father through that necklace.

"She asked him to risk his situation by hanging about her father's shop and following the lady or her carriage. He thought it a wild affair, but the somewhat romantic girl pointed out that if he were by good luck to prevent misfortune to her father, that worthy would probably consent to their marriage and reinstate the lover.

"He had done as he was bidden, and had grown suspicious as he followed the course of events. He had beguiled the driver from the box and had offered to mind the carriage while the coachman went for a drink. Fortune favoured the daring lover; the ladies came out of Berton's house without the jeweller, and this confirmed his suspicions.

"Instead of driving them to the desired destination, he had taken them part of the way and then turned off towards the station, hoping that they might not notice where they were going until he got them there.

"It was a bold stroke to charge them with theft, seeing that he had very little evidence; but he had entered upon the undertaking and intended to carry it through at all costs—for love of Marie. Things looked bad for him when the necklace was not found in their possession, but he had no alternative — he must brazen it out.

"So he insisted that the doctor and the jeweller should be fetched, and ultimately, in spite of the protests of the ladies, this was agreed to. Naturally, the arrival of these two gentlemen put a different complexion on the matter, but there was still some mystery attaching to it.

"The ladies vowed that they had never seen the necklace; if the jeweller had brought it with him, he had retained possession of it. The jeweller declared that he had handed it to the Baroness, but there was no evidence to support this statement.

"However, there was no doubt that the Baroness had attempted either a robbery or a hoax. And the fact that she was no Baroness at all and could give no reason for playing a hoax, was evidence in favour of robbery.

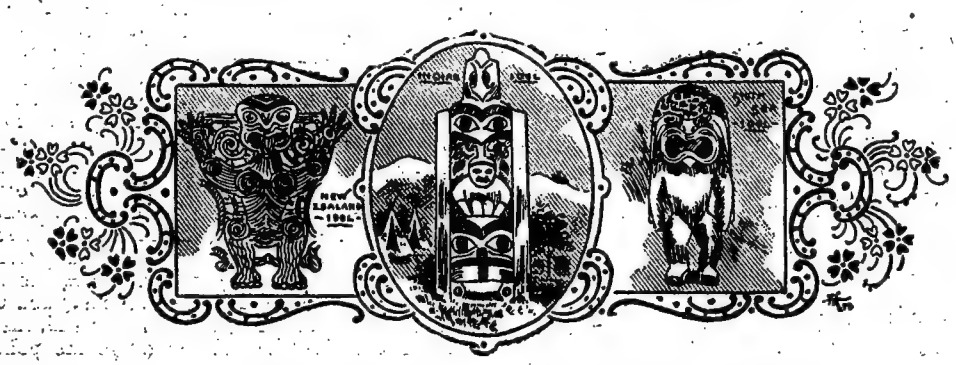
"But where was the necklace? After some cogitation, it was concluded that she had thrown it away, but it occurred to the detective at length—it is his business, to think of everything—that it might still be in the carriage. And in fact it was found neatly hidden at the back of one of the seats.

"The Baroness and her accomplice received their just reward, the younger woman getting off lightly, as she appeared to have done very little. The young assistant is now the son-in-law and partner of M. Baudet.

"When that case was made public, it appeared in the papers in a distorted form, and the detectives got most of the credit. Frenchmen dread ridicule, and the 'personal element' was suppressed as much as possible. I have said that the Baroness received her just reward, but that is hardly correct. The case was not pressed against her as much as it ought to have been, which helped the prosecutor to keep the details about his daughter's dream, and so on, from the public. It would certainly have brought ridicule upon him and he did not relish that.

"That case helped me to win promotion; I have always felt a little ashamed, but I think I have deserved the promotion in other ways since then."

George Day.



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Allinson's Blunder.

No young fellow of twenty-five ever felt more pleased with himself and with things in general than did Frank Allinson as, one summer morning, he s ttled himsel. in a far corner of a railway carriage and prepared to make himself comfortable for a somewhat lengthy railway journey. In truth, he had reason to be pleased, for he was about to pay a visit to his lady-love, and there was no doubt that the said lady-love was looking forward to his arrival and that the romantic courtship would reach its proper climax during his stay under her father's roof.

The carriage did not fill up before the train started; there were only four passengers, one in each corner, so Allinson had plenty of room for the numerous newspapers and periodicals which he had brought with him to beguile the time; but, to the surprise of the other passengers who cast occasional amused glances at the pile of reading matter, Frank made no attempt to read. He folded his arms, crossed his legs, and gazed fixedly at the roof of the carriage. He was busy with his thoughts, and if we follow his reflections we shall gather sufficient information to enable us to understand the position.

"Romantic, that's just it!" mused Allinson. "It could hardly be more so—in a quiet way, of course. No battle or murder, no breaking of hearts or anything of that sort, you know, but just quiet romance."

And then he smiled complacently.

"This is how it was"—he imagined that he was communicating this information to some invisible friend—"so you can judge for yourself. I had to go up North for the firm on an important piece of business. I arrived early in the morning, did the business and intended to return by the night train, but I met with a slight accident which upset my plan about returning so promptly.

"I had three hours to spare, so I hired a bike and went for a ride in the rural part of the place. Just as I was enjoying the ride in a quiet spot, a dog ran out and got mixed up with the bicycle, and down I came a cropper. When I picked myself up, I found that I had cut my hand rather badly, to say nothing of the bruises in various parts of my anatomy.

"I felt much shaken, and the bike wasn't any the better for the spill. I looked round for that dog to give him something for his pains—and for the pains he had given me—and up came an elderly gentleman and apologised profusely for what his dog had done.

"Well, the upshot of it was that he insisted upon my going to his house and having my hand bound up. As we walked along, I explained that I was supposed to return by the night train. He said he would send a telegram for me, as he felt sure that I shouldn't be able to get back to the town for the train; when I told him the name of the firm, it turned out that he was a great friend of the senior partner! Mr. Haverill said I need not be at all uneasy as he would arrange the thing, and that I had better stay the night.

"I stayed at his house that night and left at noon on the following day. I saw her and the older lady at breakfast, and—I clean lost my heart to that girl! I tried to think that I was not so hard hit as I fancied, and I told myself that in real life a fellow doesn't fall in love with a girl right off in that way; but it was no good. Before I had been home a week I was getting desperate about it, so I decided to try my luck by letter."

"I wrote a letter, telling her respectfully of my admiration for her; that, although I had only seen her once, she had made an ineffaceable impression upon my heart, and all that sort of thing. In the letter I addressed her as 'Dear Miss Haverill,' but on the envelope I had to put 'Miss Janet Haverill,' otherwise it might have fallen into the aunt's hands. Phew!"

For a moment the serene look on Allinson's face vanished at the thought that his little scheme would have been upset and he would never have had a chance of winning Janet.

"Of course, she would have told her brother and there would have been no end of trouble. She was particularly nice to me, I own, but aunts can be awkward under such

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circumstances. Stroke her the right way and I should say that she is a really nice woman, that aunt. Still, I didn't want my letter to fall into her hands! I believe I only heard their Christian names once. It was lucky I heard them at all, or how on earth could I have addressed that letter to Janet?

"I received an answer which led me to think that I might go on. I believe in taking one's chances, so I went on and boldly addressed her as 'Dear Janet,' and since then the correspondence has continued. She has arranged, in response to a hint from me, for the old gentleman to send me an invitation to spend two or three days up there, and it won't be my fault if I am not engaged to his daughter before I come away!"

And as that is as far as we need follow Allinson's train of thought, we will leave him to his meditations and join him again on his arrival at the end of his railway journey.

Allinson found Mr. Haverill waiting for him in a dog cart.

"Here you are!" said that gentleman cheerily. "I had to come to town myself on an urgent matter, so I thought I'd wait for you and take you home. Jump in, and we'll be off."

Allinson thought this was a piece of good fortune; the old gentleman, as he styled him, was evidently in a good humour, and there would be a chance of working in some hint or observation which might show Mr. Haverill "how the land lay" and might also enable Allinson to discover whether Janet's father was favourable to the proposed engagement or only luke-warm on the subject. After a few minutes' drive, Frank decided to venture an inquiry.

"I trust your daughter is quite well, Mr. Haverill," he remarked.

He intended his manner to be quite easy, but he felt that it was awkward.

"Oh, yes! Bessie's in splendid health, thank you," responded Haverill heartily, as he deftly flicked a fly from the back of the horse.

"H'm! he must have misunderstood me," thought Allinson. "I'll try again."

Then, aloud, he continued:

"How is Miss Janet Haverill?"

He emphasised the Christian name.

"Quite well, thank you. My sister has been in remarkably good spirits lately. Shouldn't wonder if we meet her when we get nearer home; she is very good to the poor people, and this is one of her visiting days."

Allinson felt himself slowly turning pale and cold. What did this mean? He had spoken distinctly enough, and there could be no doubt that Haverill had not spoken heedlessly. A nameless fear began to take possession of Allinson; could it be that he had made a blunder in the Christian names of the two women! Horrible thought! If that were so, he stood practically pledged to the aunt of the girl with whom he had fallen in love.

While he was deliberating upon the best way to ascertain the truth, Haverill put an end to all doubt by remarking:

"Bessie goes with her aunt sometimes, but this afternoon she wanted to do something in her own piece of garden, so we shall find my daughter at home."

The words fell upon Allinson's ears like a death sentence, and a groan escaped his lips, causing his companion to ask, "Eh?" under the impression that the young man had said something.

It was true, he had made a mistake! What an idiot he had been! And how was he to get out of it—could he get out of it?

Miss Janet Haverill was much younger than her brother, but she was probably thirty-three; no doubt she was an agreeable woman—a good woman—but not the woman he would have for choice.

He understood now why her letters had seemed rather temperate; he had noticed this from the first, and it had restrained his own ebullitions.

Only about half-a-dozen letters had passed on either side, and Allinson had promised himself that he would make up for the comparative coolness of the written communications when he saw the girl again and "fixed up" the engagement. He had put it down to maidenly modesty; he was now inclined to call it old-maidenly modesty.

The difference between Allinson's feelings when he began his journey and his feelings as he finished it must be left to the imagination of the reader.

He scarcely spoke a word during the remainder of the drive; he was busily occupied in trying alternately to evolve some scheme for getting out of the difficulty and persuading himself that it would not be so bad if he did have to marry the aunt, as thirty-three is not a great age.

As they drew up at the door, Bessie appeared to welcome them; then Allinson set his teeth and made up his mind to try the plan which had occurred to him. It was risky, but desperate diseases require desperate remedies.

He was shown to his room as soon as the usual formalities were over, but there was no time to be lost. He made his way downstairs again and entered the drawing-room, where, to his delight, he found Bessie.

His joy was increased when she suggested that he might like to look at the garden—there was just time before tea.

He readily assented.

"I'm in luck!" he murmured. "I hope to goodness my luck will continue and get me out of this mess!"

It was a nice little garden, but Allinson paid little heed to it; he saw what appeared to be a quiet corner and directed his steps towards it, Bessie accompanying him as a matter of course.

When he reached the spot he found that it was even more secluded than he had supposed, and with a deep breath he began the attack.

"Miss Haverill—Bessie," he began boldly, taking her hand and looking straight into her eyes, "for three whole months I have longed for this moment! I loved you the very moment I first saw you, and my love has been increasing from that moment to this. Forgive me if I have been abrupt, and let the strength of my love be my excuse."

Taken by surprise, the girl stood motionless; her colour came and went, her breathing seemed almost to cease, but Frank noticed that she did not attempt to withdraw her hand. A fierce joy filled his heart, and he continued with a passionate earnestness that could not be mistaken. His boldness and sincerity were in his favour; there is some attraction in being thus taken by storm.

"Listen to what I have to say, and you will see what I have dared in order to win you," he continued. "And when you have heard, you will help me."

Still holding the girl's hand, still gazing stedfastly into her eyes, he spoke of the impression she had made upon him at their first meeting, and how his love had caused him to risk her displeasure and that of her father

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by writing to her. He went very fully into that part of the story, and he could see that the recital was pleasing to Bessie. Then, in a straightforward manly way, he briefly told her what had happened.

When he had finished, his heart seemed to stand still as he awaited some word or sign from Bessie; he knew that the position was a ridiculous one—one that might excite the laughter rather than the sympathy of the girl who stood before him. At that moment Allinson would have given a great deal never to have been born.

There was a conflict of sentiment in Bessie's heart; there was an inclination to laugh, yet she could not but recognise that the young fellow must love her deeply to have ventured upon such a step, and that the mistake was the result of his venture. She liked him, she was charmed by his open manner, and every girl is naturally pleased when a man risks something for her sake.

"It is a dreadful mistake that you should have written to Aunt Janet instead of to me, Mr. Allinson," she said demurely, yet there was just the slightest trace of a twinkle of merriment in her eyes. "I will help you, just to spare auntie—and it might make me look ridiculous——"

"You're an angel!" cried Frank ecstatically. "Then you do love me?"

"Oh, I didn't say so!" returned the girl archly. "It is just possible that I might——"

But she didn't have a chance to finish the sentence, for Allinson had her in his arms. And they were both perfectly unconscious that behind the shrubs was a woman with her hands pressed to her heart; Miss Janet Haverill had returned and had entered the garden in search of them, arriving just in time to catch enough of Allinson's story to realise the truth.

While Frank and Bessie were spending a few blissful moments, the mind of Janet Haverill was busy with a plan for cutting the knot. With lightning rapidity the thought flashed through her brain. How foolish she had been to suppose that this young man could fall in love with her while Bessie was there! What should she do? Most people thought her very prim and somewhat eccentric—why not take advantage of this reputation? It would not be acting truthfully, which was against her principles, but—

A noise behind the shrub made the lovers start and stand apart. Miss Janet Haverill stepped forward with a smile, holding out a hand to each.

"I have been guilty of a little plot in the interest of Bessie's happiness," she said with a smile and in a firm voice.

Her hearers did not know what it cost her to speak thus.

"Bessie has no mother, and I have to act in that capacity as well as I can. When I received Mr. Allinson's letter which was intended for Bessie, I resolved to find out, if I could, whether he was worthy of her. Hence my little plot and my request to my brother that he should invite Mr. Allinson here for a day or two. It was rather a peculiar thing to do, but I have a reputation for doing peculiar things now and then. Now I think I had better leave you."

And before the astonished young people could well understand what it all meant, she was gone. It was well for her that she did leave them, for she could not have kept up the part another minute.

"Well—I—never!" exclaimed Allinson.

Then he heaved a tremendous sigh of relief.

"It is very good of her to look after me," said Bessie slowly, "but it was a strange thing to do. She is a little eccentric."

There was a pause for a few seconds.

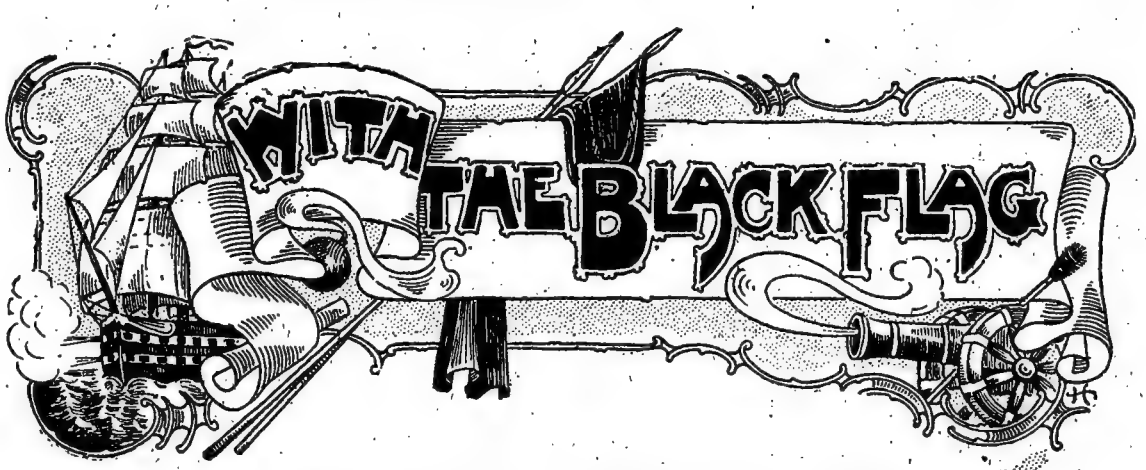
"But I wish she had let me do my own love-making—I mean my own correspondence."

"Yes, you mean correspondence. You can do your own love-making now, and the more you do the better I shall like it!"

"So that's why Janet wanted me to invite the young fellow, eh?" muttered Mr. Haverill, as he retired for the night. "She knew he was sweet on Bessie and wanted to bring them together! She mumbled something about having written to him. Fancy Janet turning match-maker! But you never can get to the bottom of a woman, they're too deep!"

Mr. Haverill would have been even more surprised if he had seen what was on the letters which his sister burnt that night in her room while the tears slowly fell from her half-closed eyes.

Daisy George.



A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By William Westall.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty. He is intrusted with dispatches for delivery to Bolivar, the supreme chief.

Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.

John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.

General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic. He received Wyvenhoe and Cautley on their arrival in Venezuela.

Dons Iago Santleo, and Antonio Bonanza, two Venezuelans who accompany Wyvenhoe when he takes the dispatches to Bolivar.

CHAPTER XII.

An Adventure in the Forest.

The side path into which Don Antonio led us was so obstructed by bush and bramble that the Zambo and the Indian had to go in front and broaden it with their machetes, which they did nearly as fast as they could walk, and in a few minutes we came to a place where the trees were wider apart and the undergrowth less dense. Here a halt was called and the lancer lifted from his horse and laid on the ground.

Bearing in mind Bonanza's warning I inquired in a whisper whither he had been and what had happened.

After listening intently and looking anxiously round, he answered, also in an undertone:

"I left you so suddenly because I fancied I saw through the trees the red plume of a dragoon, but thinking I might be mistaken, and knowing that if I gave a false alarm you would laugh at me, I went forward to get a better view and after a sharp run caught sight of a Spanish lancer as he disappeared at a bend in the trail. So the red plume was no illusion. Perhaps I should have returned at once, but at the same instant it occurred to me that it would be well if I could first lay the fellow by the heels and ascertain whence he came and what he was after. To this end I made through the wood, mostly on my hands and knees, and as the track thereabouts turns abruptly to the right got ahead of him, posted myself behind a bush and there awaited his coming.

"As shooting would have alarmed the lancer's comrades, if, as I conjectured, he had comrades, I drew my sword and, as he went by, sprang from my hiding place and gave him a stroke on the head that brought him senseless to the ground, fastened him to the saddle with his stirrup leathers and hurried back. Yet not before I had descried other red plumes moving, as it seemed, hitherward, though owing to the windings of the track and the closeness of the trees I may be mistaken. Anyhow they cannot be far off, and there may be more of them about, for which reason I turned in here and warned you to make no noise."

While Don Antonio was speaking we had been pouring *aguardiente* down the wounded man's throat, who soon so far recovered his senses as to be able to answer questions, albeit he was much weakened by loss of blood and appeared to be almost at the last gasp.

He said he belonged to a regiment stationed at a place called Vargos, whither, early in the morning, a scout had brought word that Bolivar and two British generals were at Marco (where we had spent the night) on which a squadron was dispatched thither to take us, dead or alive; but on finding we were gone they rode on, hoping we might land again, their scouts meanwhile keeping the boats in view from the river bank.

The man said further that he formed part of a sergeant's guard, which had been ordered to scour the wood, that the main body were in the neighbourhood, and scouts everywhere.

"You are surrounded and cannot escape, my death will be avenged," he added faintly, then fell back and spoke no more.

This was alarming intelligence indeed, for though well armed we were only four, and escaping the hundred men, which was probably the strength of the squadron, seemed almost past praying for. If our retreat had not already been cut off it soon would be. Returning by the cattle track was impossible. It was the way our pursuers would take. Equally impossible to stay where we were, we could be tracked by the dead lancer's blood and the hoof prints of his horse.

Our only chance was to take to the forest and make for the river, an undertaking that would involve a path in some places and crawling in others. Moreover, we might encounter vegetation so dense as to be absolutely impassable, while if we did not keep within easy reach of the trail, we should lose ourselves in the mazes of the forest. But we had no choice; successful or unsuccessful, the attempt must be made, and quickly.

Don Antonio tethered the horse to a tree and gave the dead trooper's carbine, pistols and ammunition, to the

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Zambo, who had only his machete. Then we crept under the bushes, and lest the Indian should desert, or fall into the hands of the soldiers and tell them which way we had gone, we made him go first.

This was, as we thought, a necessary precaution, though it almost proved our ruin, for shortly afterwards we heard voices and the neigh of a horse, and through the network of brambles and branches espied the nodding plumes of half a score helmets, whereupon the Indian, frantic with fear, uttered a loud yell.

Bonanza knocked him down and grasped his throat, but too late, the Spaniards had heard the cry and came on with exultant shouts, we on our part kneeling behind two prostrate trees, which having fallen crosswise, made a serviceable breastwork. When they had got as close as the thickness of the timber and the nature of the ground permitted, our assailants called on us to surrender, and, receiving no reply, opened fire with their pistols and carbines, but being well sheltered, none of us were hit.

On the other hand, to remain where we were and let these fellows stand by till the others came up would be fatal.

"Let each take his man from the right, then retreat to the left. If we shoot straight we may kill three or four of them," whispered Santleo.

Which we did, aiming so true that the discharge emptied four saddles. On this the Spaniards, wild with rage, made a desperate attempt to reach us, but the efforts of the loose horses to break away, and the refusal of the others to face the thorns and leap the logs, threw them into confusion, an opportunity by which we profited to fire a volley with our pistols that emptied two more saddles and wounded a horse.

The Zambo cut the nearest Spaniard down with his machete.

We were now equal, four to four, and seeing that the troopers had dismounted we sprang over the logs and charged; the Zambo, who was as nimble as a cat and as fleet as a deer, leading the way and cutting the nearest Spaniard down with his machete. Whereupon the remainder bolted, and we were beginning to breathe again when, to our dismay, ten more lancers, who had no doubt heard the firing, came down the trail at a gallop and burst into the thicket.

These were joined by the three fugitives, and it soon became evident that the combined force would make another attack, and as they imagined that Bolivar, on whose head a great price had been put, was almost within their grasp, it was likely to be a resolute attack.

And they were thirteen, we four!

Moreover, the Spaniards being mounted and in possession of the trail our way to the boats was barred, and with thirteen men close at our heels we could escape neither by crawling under the bushes nor cutting a way through them.

Nevertheless they seemed to hesitate and Don Antonio, ever fearless and alert, went forward on his hands and knees to make a nearer reconnaisance. Returning in a few minutes later he reported that the Godos were considering whether they should attack us on horseback or on foot.

We hoped it would be on foot, plumed helmets, cavalry boots and spurs being ill adapted for fighting in a tropical jungle.

The troopers appeared to be of the same opinion for they presently rode along the path cleared by ourselves, the three dismounted men clearing it here and there with their swords, but keeping too well in cover to give us a chance of getting a shot at them.

In the meantime we had taken up another and, as we thought, a stronger position. A sort of semi-circle it was, fronted by a tangle of fallen branches, between which we could see what went on without showing ourselves, our flanks and rear being protected by thickets that neither man nor beast could pass. So we had no way of retreat, which in ordinary circumstances would have been a serious drawback, but as with the possible exception of Don Antonio we had almost abandoned hope it made little difference. Retreat being in any event impossible all we could do was to sell our lives as dearly as might be.

A further disadvantage and cause for discouragement was the want of suitable ammunition. Our guns had two barrels, one (rifled) for bullets, the other for pellets, and not expecting to encounter either big game or enemies we had brought with us only one ball for each pull, and these having been expended, we had nothing left save small shot, of the sort used for bird and monkey killing. Neither had we any more pistol cartridges and the few found in the fallen lancer's pouch were too large for our barrels.

So there was nothing for it but to load with shot, putting two charges into each barrel, well rammed down.

Our plan was to lie perdu until the troopers were within a few yards of us, then let fly at their faces with both barrels, each of us taking two men from the right, and keep them at bay with our pistols and swords so long as we might.

Meanwhile, they continued their quest, but being bewildered by the dim light of the forest, which, to men fresh from the brilliant sunshine was semi-darkness, slowly and with frequent halts, from which we inferred that they had not yet detected our whereabouts, though the trail was plain enough to anybody with eyes.

By this time most of the lancers were on foot, slashing at the lianas and pendant vines with their swords; and closely examining the bushes as though they feared an ambuscade.

"Caramba! I believe the fools are going to miss us, after

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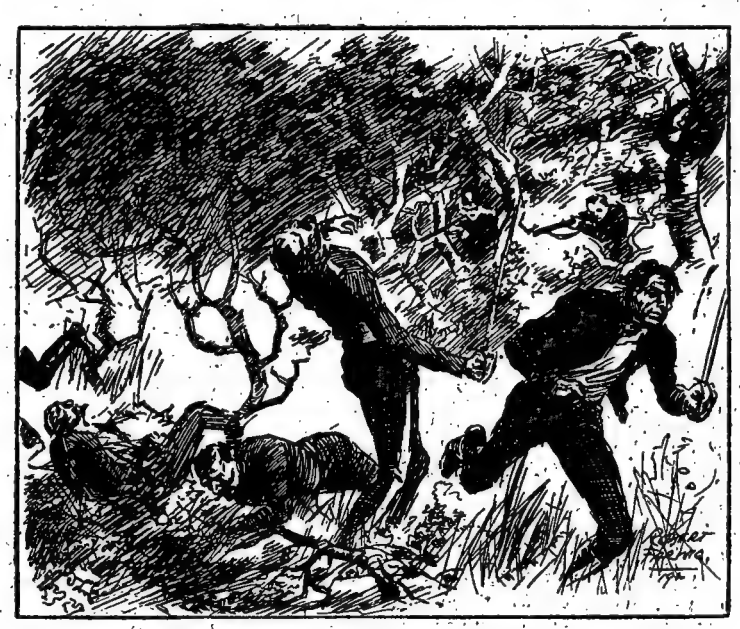

One man fell to the Zambo's carbine.

all," whispered Don Antonio. "If they go much further in that direction we shall be able to rush out and ride off on their horses."

But this new born hope was speedily quashed. A frightened yell told us that the Spaniards had unearthed the Indian, who, thinking he would be safer alone, had given us the slip and crawled under a bush.

We could hear the poor fellow's pitiful appeal for mercy, which was granted on condition of his showing them where we were hiding, and he presently appeared in front of our lair, between two lancers with drawn swords.

"There they are, behind those boughs," he said.

On this all the troopers, save one who was left to look after the horses, were formed in line and the sergeant, stepping forward, summoned us to surrender. To which, as surrender meant immediate execution, we naturally made no answer.

"A hundred thousand devils! I doubt whether they are there after all. I can neither hear them nor see them," he exclaimed. "If they are not, I'll have you hanged" (to the Indian).

"They are, they are, I saw them go there and they cannot have got away, and I heard them say they had no more cartridges," replied the trembling wretch in an agonised voice.

"We shall soon see. Advance men, and give 'em a volley."

A shower of bullets rattled among the branches, but as we had heard the order and ducked betimes we took no harm.

"Shall we destroy the dispatches?" said Don Iago in a whisper.

"How would you destroy them?" I asked.

"Tear them up and drop them into the hollow of this tree. The ants will do the rest."

"Not yet, I think. But if either of us falls the survivor had better make away with them at once."

"That is agreed, then?"

"It is, and if we both fall Don Antonio will perhaps do what is necessary."

"If that happens, I shall. But it won't," quoth he cheerily. "You are worth a good many dead men yet, señores. We are in a tight fix, I admit, but I have not the least doubt of our getting out of it. Cock your guns, gentlemen, the Godos are coming, only don't let us fire until we can see the whites of their eyes. Hark! The sergeant is giving an order."

"The rebels are either not there, or they have no cartridges," he was saying. "We will take Bolivar alive if we can, but remember that dead or alive he is worth ten thousand reales to us, and we are three to one. Another volley, my lads, then at them with the cold steel."

"Good Heavens! I believe the sergeant is a bit afraid, though they are three to one," whispered Don Antonio, with a smothered laugh.

"To your post! We are too near together," I answered, and he moved away.

The volley was given, hurting us no more than the other had done, for the same reason, and the troopers, responding with a cheer to their commander's "Forward, my lads!" came on, but being hampered by their boots and spurs and impeded by the boughs, some of which were as big as small trees, slowly and clumsily, and with many a slip and tumble, while we, unseen yet seeing everything, awaited the onset silently with our fingers on our triggers.

Notwithstanding their difficulties the men kept well together, the sergeant bringing up the rear and encouraging them very energetically with his voice, but very little by his example.

While this went on we lay low, making no sign which might give the Godos a clue to our precise whereabouts, yet vigilant withal. When they were quite close, so close that we could hear their laboured breathing and muttered curses I gave a low whistle, on which we all sprang to our feet and let fly with our seven barrels at as many heads. One man fell to the Zambo's carbine. The other poor wretches, peppered with our shot, whirled round, howling with anguish, for the pellets having scattered all were hit. Loudest of all screamed the sergeant, who had got one or two in his eye.

Their faces streamed with blood, they tumbled about in all directions, blaspheming and exclaiming, falling among the branches and running madly, they knew not whither. Several were blinded, and of the three who came off scatheless the Zambo cut down one and the others fled.

We might have killed them all, but escape, not slaughter, being our object, we ran to the horses which were tethered in a glade near our first hiding place, and when the lancer who had been left in charge of them saw what had happened he mounted and made off.

"Run! Quick and double quick! There are more coming. I can hear the jingle of their accoutrements and the tramp of their chargers," cried Don Antonio, whose ears were as sharp as his eyes.

We responded with a will, and five minutes afterwards were mounted and away.

None too soon, for on emerging from the wood we perceived a long line of lancers pacing down the trail, happily to our left, else had our retreat been cut off.

The leaders, catching sight of us, gave a loud shout, and we knew that we should have to ride with death behind us, and the off chance of being intercepted, or not finding the boats where we had left them.

I was the last. Accident had given me the place of honour, an honour, however, which I had gladly been spared. But the track being too narrow, except in a few places, for horses to pass each other or for two men to ride abreast, there was no possibility of changing the order of our going and my pride prevented my making the attempt.

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As we had only a short start, everything depended on the speed and stoutness of our horses, and John Ready being on the alert. At the best, we could not count on having more than three or four minutes to embark and put a few yards of water between our pursuers and ourselves.

The trail, as I have already remarked, was narrow, a mere cattle track, rough, uneven, and slippery, and so tortuous withal that it was seldom we could see more than two or three hundred paces either backward or forward, and there were so many impending branches that it was almost as much as one's life was worth to look backward. On the other hand, and for these very reasons, the leading lancers would find it difficult to use their pistols with effect, so that I had little fear of being shot from behind.

My horse was a good sort, fleet and strong, and well up to my weight. He could have gone faster, only the Zambo's which was immediately in front of me, could not, and I had to regulate my pace by his. The two Dons could also have gone faster, and I asked them to do so; but they refused point-blank, Santleo indignantly, Bonanza with a laugh.

Fortunately for us our pursuers were under a similar disadvantage, which was to our advantage. The main body had to accommodate their speed to that of the first man. If they could have put their fleetest chargers at the head of the cavalcade it had been a poor look out for the Zambo and me. Even as it was I had serious misgivings, which were not long in being realised.

Despite the risk of breaking my head thereby I often looked backwards, but owing to dips in the ground and the windings of the trail it was not easy to make sure whether the enemy were gaining on us or we on them. Now and then I got a glimpse through an opening in the trees of a long chain of dancing plumes, now and then sighted the first man who when he saw me shook his lance fiercely, at the same time gesticulating and shouting to those behind him.

After a while, a very short while, I began to see more of this gentleman than I liked. He was gaining on us, when we presently came to an exceptionally straight bit of road. I perceived that he was considerably ahead of the others, from which I concluded the next man's horse was no better than the Zambo's and that if the first man were disposed of we should stand a better chance of making our point. As might seem, however, he was more likely to dispose of me. I could not always be casting backward glances, and as often as not he was invisible, hidden by intervening trees and bushes. He might overtake me without my knowing it, and have his lance into me before I could turn round.

What should I do? How make head against this new peril from which escape either by stratagem or speed seemed impossible.

To turn round and face my pursuer was simply to insure my capture by his comrades. Taking aim with a rifle from the back of a galloping horse at something behind you is an impossible feat, and my rifle was empty. But my pistols, double charged with shot and primed, were within reach of my hand, and in the circumstances pellets were likely to be more effective than bullets.

But as it was clear that I could not look backward, hold my pistols, guide my horse and dodge the branches at one and the same time. I told the Zambo to look for me, which he did very keenly.

We were in a narrow section of the trail and had just rounded a sharp bend when the Zambo signalled that the enemy was in sight.

I glanced backward. He was close behind, coming on with his lance couched as fast as his horse could gallop, and drawing nearer at every stride. In another minute the point of his lance would be within twenty paces of my back.

I looked before me, dodged a branch, cocked my pistols, counted sixty, then turning as far round in my saddle as I could, fired one barrel at the lancer's face, the other at the charger's head. Both shots went home; the man dropped his reins and his lance, and the horse, after giving a tremendous buck jump which sent the trooper flying over his head, wheeled round and galloped back.

All of which was highly satisfactory. I had got rid of an awkward customer, and the loose horse, maddened with pain would of a certainty throw the leading lancers into confusion and retard their progress. And a respite was needed. The Zambo's horse was showing signs of distress, and all were beginning to flag, so after turning the next bend we drew rein, and being unable to see more than a few yards either to our front or rear, listened.

I could hear only a confused murmur, mingled with a faint metallic din, which seemed a long way off, but no trampling, for the ground was soft and the horses were unshod.

"We are gaining on them," I remarked to Don Antonio, who was next before the Zambo.

"Yes, though they are nearer than you think," he answered. "The trees deaden the sound. But, fortunately, we have not much further to go, the worst is over."

And then, our panting steeds having recovered their wind somewhat, we pushed on again, and coming shortly to a part where the trees were less dense, got another glimpse of the chain of red plumes.

Bonanza was right, they were nearer than I had thought.

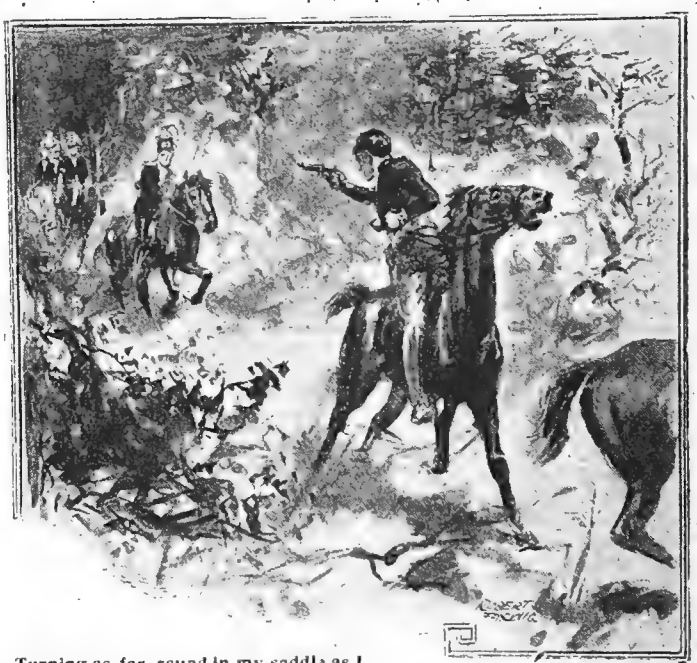
A few minutes afterwards we descried the creek, and gladdened by the sight, galloped merrily forward. The stress was over, the goal well nigh won We should have time to embark and get away before our pursuers could spit us with their lances or reach us with their bullets.

"*Mira* (Look)!" cried Don Iago, pointing to the water, and then, as it was no longer necessary for us to keep together, he went ahead, closely followed by Bonanza.

When I came up with them they were at the creek. Bonanza turned to me with a look of dismay.

The flecheras were not there.

"What can have become of your servant?" he asked.



Turning as far round in my saddle as I could I fired one barrel at the lancer's face.

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"He had strict orders to wait in the creek till we returned. In a few minutes the Godos will be here and without boats, escape is impossible."

"What has become of him I know no more than yourself; but I am sure that if John Ready is alive he is not far off," quoth I.

"Let us ride further, and if we do not find him we shall perhaps find a boat," said Don Iago quietly.

Which we did, following the creek, and coming presently to the river saw the two boats standing off and on about a hundred yards from the bank, to our great relief, as also to our surprise, for we could not tell what on earth it meant.

"What a fool that fellow of yours must be," said Bonanza. "Why does not he come? Shout to him."

"Come hither and take us on board at once," I sang out.

Ready answered that he could not, and beckoned to us to go to h m.

"*Madre de Dios!* The Godos are on us!" exclaimed Bonanza looking backward. "In another minute twenty lancers——"

"To the river! We must swim for it," cried Santleo, and with that plunged into the water, an example we all followed, for the Spaniards were at our heels.

As soon as the horses were out of their depth we slipped from their backs, holding on to their manes with one hand and guiding them with the other.

By this time Bonanza's twenty lancers, and as many more, were close to the river, and after a moment's hesitation a full half of them took to the water and made after us without dismounting.

The others unslung their carbines and prepared to shoot. So did John Ready and the Zambo, and as we came alongside, gave our pursuers a volley that sent several of them to the bottom and the rest to the right about.

We were no sooner aboard than the Indians paddled away with frantic energy, sail was made and we went up stream faster than we had ever gone before.

"Why did you leave the creek, John?" I asked Ready.

"Could not help it, sir. The Indians who returned from the funeral reported that there were Spaniards about, which so frightened the cowardly beggars that if I had not let them pull into the river they would have deserted, every man jack of 'em; and it was only by threatening to shoot the patrons if they moved further away, that I kept the boats where you found them. But good gracious, sir, you are wounded! Your head is bleeding."

"I daresay. I felt something sting me as we took to the water, but it cannot be anything serious or I should be there yet. Only a scalp wound," I said laying my hand on the place.

"Don Iago, too. See how he is bleeding!" exclaimed Ready.

I looked at Santleo. His coat sleeve was reddened and drops of blood were oozing from the fingers of his left hand.

"I don't think it is much," he said quietly. "I felt a bullet strike my arm when we were half way to the boat."

"Let me examine you," put in Don Antonio briskly. "As I was destined for the medical career and studied surgery for six months at Caracas I am a bit of a doctor. Now, Señor major."

"Don Iago first. He is worse hurt than I am," quoth I, on which Bonanza slit open Santleo's sleeve with his knife.

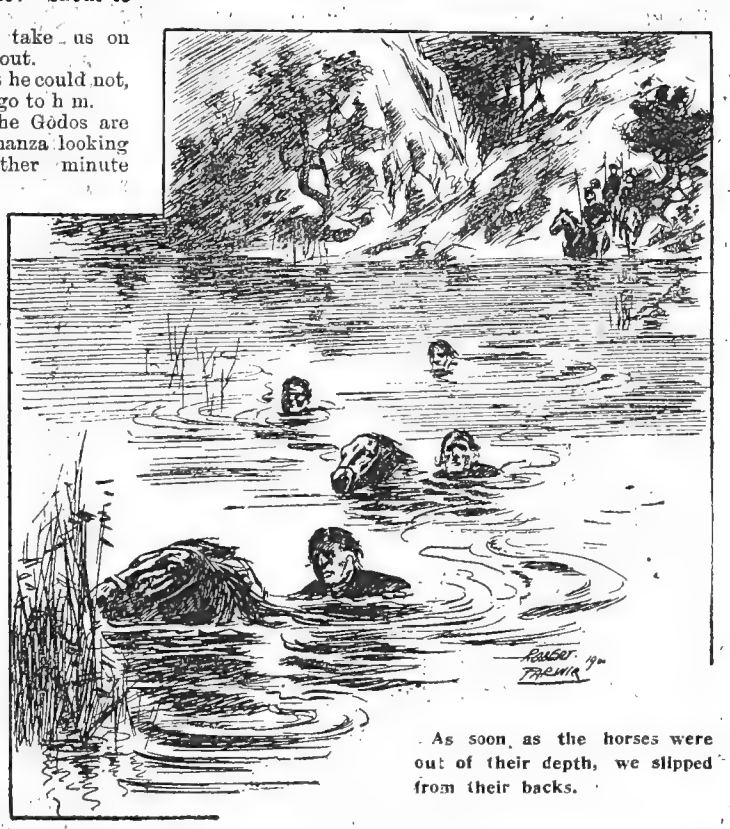
"Ah, the bullet went through the fleshy part of the arm, just above the elbow. No bones broken, thank Heaven. I will bind it up and you must carry it in a sling for a few days."

We had brought with us a few simple surgical appliances, and these being produced, our "bit of a doctor" deftly plastered my head and bandaged Don Iago's arm.

"It might have been a good deal worse," he observed pleasantly. "Had one bullet gone a shade more to the left the bone of Don Iago's arm would have been smashed; had the other gone a shade more to the right, Señor Wyvenhoe's skull would have been smashed."

"All's well that ends well," said Santleo pensively in English.

Don Iago quoting Shakespeare in Shakespeare's own language! I could hardly believe my own ears.



As soon as the horses were out of their depth, we slipped from their backs.

"You know English, then," I exclaimed, as soon as I could speak.

"I saw the words in a book and inquired their meaning; they have dwelt in my memory. Striking phrases are apt to dwell in one's memory, you know."

"But your pronunciation is perfect."

"That is just a chance, or because I happen to have a good ear and a retentive memory; but we had better get out of these wet things, or we shall be having fever and ague."

(To be continued.)

BROWN: "You know I'm quite a near neighbour of yours now, Mrs. Golightly. I've just taken a little house on the river."

Mrs. Golightly: "Oh! Well, I hope you'll drop in one day."

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT HOLIDAYS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Golden Sceptre," by G. H. Thornhill, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. Arthur A. Last, "Dales," Henley Road, Ipswich. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about ADVENTURES in SEARCH of PEARSON'S £10 NOTES, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, September 17th. Post-cards only, please.

One for the Girl.

A FRIEND of mine last month went to an East Coast seaside resort, and, wishing to let me know of his safe arrival, he went into a sub.-post-office and inquired if he could send a telegram direct to London, and how long it would take.

The young lady, who was inclined to be snubbish, cut short his inquiries with:

"I am not paid to answer silly questions."

Her face blanched wonderfully, however, when she found herself compelled to wire the following message:

"Arrived safe. Girls here ugly and bad-tempered."

A. A. L.

All Were Welcome.

IN Blackpool, where I was spending a holiday last week, I witnessed a good joke one morning.

At this favourite resort there are a number of auctioneers' shops along the promenade where you can purchase anything from a solid (rolled) gold watch to a pair of bootlaces.

The bidding was going on very slowly, when a fashionably dressed young man walked up to the auctioneer, and, catching him by the arm, inquired if he could bid.

"Certainly," said the knight of the hammer; "just what we want."

"Then I bid you good morning," said the joker, and retreated.

D. R.

Off Their Bearings.

Two Sheffield grinders who had not been at the seaside since they were children made up their minds to have a day at Blackpool.

As they usually frequented the slipper baths when at home they thought it would be a great treat to have a dip in the briny.

Engaging a machine they were soon wading and splashing about. One of them, turning to see how his mate was getting on, saw him fumbling at the bottom as if to find something.

"What's the matter? What are ta feelin' daan in t' watter like that for?"

"What's t' matter?" replied the other. "What's ta thinks t' matter? I'm feeling for t' plug to let t' watter off."

E. H.

Mr. Bowser at the Seaside.

MR. BOWSER had taken Mrs. Bowser to the seaside for a week, and as he sniffed the breezy, briny ozone of Slumpton-by-the-Sea, he said:

"Now, my dear, be sure and take all the sea air you can inhale, for this is the last holiday I can afford."

"All right, Mr. Bowser," she replied, reflecting on his past unselfish nature; "keep your mind easy, there'll be precious little left after you get your share."

W. H.

Caught.

ONCE, while on a fishing tour in Scotland, a gamekeeper whom I knew, took me along the banks of a stream and showed me a place, where, said he, if I waded out to yon muckle stane, I would be sure to catch something.

Drawing on my long waterproof fishing boots, I waded over to the "muckle stane" and promptly slipped into a hole which brought the water up to my neck.

Gurgling and spluttering I turned and began to anathematise the gamekeeper, to which he coolly responded:

"Hoot awa, mon, didn't I tell ye it was a grand place tae catch things, you've just copped a crab the noo and ye'll be catchin' the cauld if ye dinna hurry oot o' that."

L. H.

Scottie Again.

AN English gentleman on holiday in Scotland happened to meet an Elder in the "Auld licht Kirk" who was very severe in his denunciation of what he called "deesecreetion o' the Sawbath day" and more particularly against the crime (?) of fishing on Sunday, to which the Englishman was rather given.

The Englishman resolved to test the Elder's genuineness and, if possible, get even with him at the same time.

One Monday he turned up at the Elder's house with a particularly fine basket of trout and presented a goodly portion of them to the Elder.

After the gift was duly accepted he casually remarked:

"But, Elder, I clean forgot to tell you that these trout were caught yesterday, Sunday."

"Weel, sir," replied the Elder, gazing at the trout, "I dinna see that that was ony fau't o' the troots."

The Englishman departed, his purpose unaccomplished.

A. R. S.

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Queer Botany at the Hub.

There is a man in our town who is not wondrous wise, although he makes heroic efforts to keep up appearances. He has recently acquired wealth, and has lately added a well-stocked conservatory to his establishment. This he was not long since exhibiting to a party of visiting friends with pride.

"What is that?" asked a lady, pointing to a certain plant.

Mr. P. was nonplussed for a moment, but, quickly recovering, he answered with much gravity:

"That, madam, is an exceedingly rare specimen of the Encyclopædia Britannica." J. C.

A Girl Without Gumption.

A good story was heard in Hull the other day. A well-known resident, whose name, for obvious reasons, is not disclosed, had a daughter taking pianoforte lessons.

She did not progress very fast, so the father went to ask the tutor how it was.

"Well, you see, she doesn't appear to have sufficient gumption."

"Eh, what! Not sufficient gumption. Why didn't you let me know before. Buy her some immediately, and send the account in to me. The idea, letting my daughter go on practising all this time and no gumption. If this occurs again, young man, I'll get her a fresh tutor."

J. W. V. H.

A Different Kind of Bull.

Lady Cyclist (to yokel on horseback): 'Have you seen my husband, my good man? He was wearing a straw hat and riding a bicycle."

"Lor', mum," replied the yokel, "I 'specks he's the gent I seed run into the black bull jest now."

"Oh, dear, dear! Poor John! Did—did it kill him?"

"Lor' bless ye, mum, I don't specks so; but the beer ain't very fust-rate neither."

And then she realised that the "Black Bull" was a public-house. H. E. L.

The Mummy Died.

Several weeks ago an honest countryman, anxious to explore the wonders of the British Museum, obtained a special holiday for that purpose.

Taking with him a couple of lady friends he presented himself at the door for admittance.

"No admission to-day, sir," said the keeper.

"But I must come in; I've a holiday on purpose."

"No matter. This is a close day, and the museum is shut."

"What!" said John, "ain't this public property?"

"Yes, but its like this," whisp-red the keeper. "One of the mummies died a few days ago, and we are going to bury him."

"Oh, in that case we won't intrude," said John.

So he returned M. E. L.

Missing.

I witnessed the following amusing incident at Southport the other day while on my holidays.

A raw countryman, having been just enrolled as a member of the "A" Division of the County Police, was stationed on night duty near the gasworks with instructions to take particular notice of everything on his beat, and, if he found anything to be missing, to report the same to his sergeant.

It appears that during the night one of the large gasometers had been emptied, and sank into its basin.

On the arrival of the sergeant, the new "Robert," who was found in a state of excitement, pointed to the empty framework of the gasometer and said:

"Well, I don't know whether it's all right, sir, but one of them 'ere things has gone." A. Y.

"Up Yer Gits!"

At a popular seaside resort the other afternoon a party of trippers had decided on a donkey ride, but one particularly stout old lady had some little difficulty in securing a mount.

When she essayed to clamber into the saddle the long-suffering brute turned his head round—apparently making a mental calculation as to the weight of the fair one—and then deliberately edged away.

"It's no go, missis!" grinned the lad in charge, "e's seen yer. We'll hev to try another moke!"

Approaching the row of donkeys, the urchin selected one, threw his coat over the animal's head, and thus led him forth.

"Quick, missis!" he said to the astounded lady. "Up yer gits! It 'e once gits 'is 'ead loose an' spots yer, yer'll get no ride! 'E wor asleep when I caught 'im, or 'e wouldn't 'ave come out!" A.N.O.N.

"BESIEGED WITH B.P."

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Full particulars appeared last week, and will appear again shortly. They also appear in the current issue of

THE CURIOSITY SHOP.

A coupon from that paper must accompany each order.

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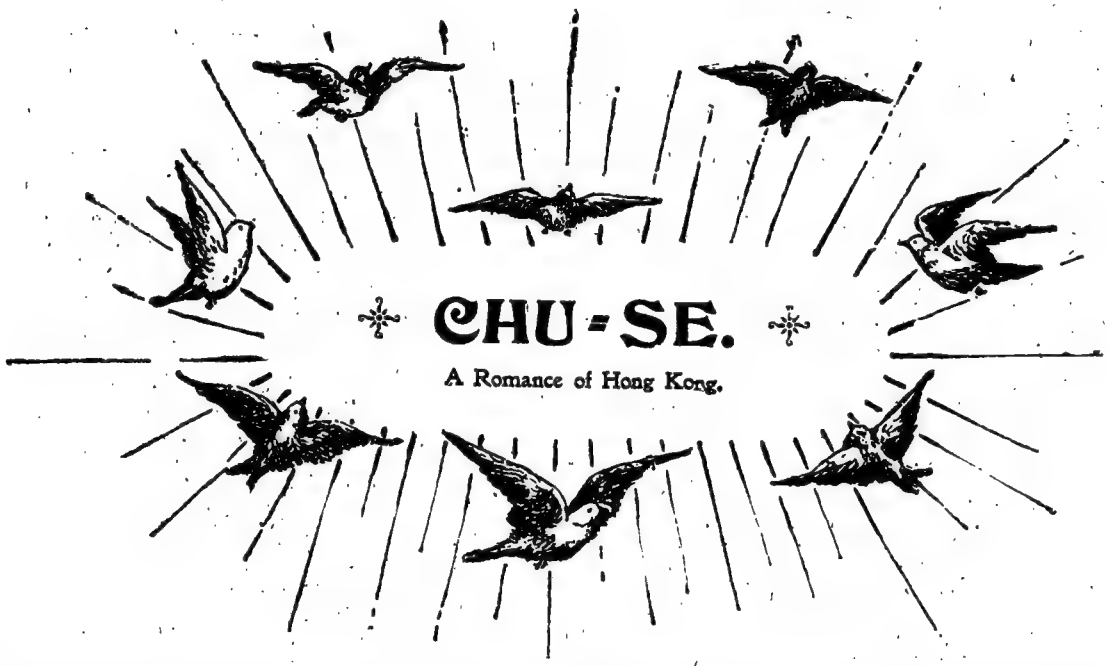

CHU-SE.

A Romance of Hong Kong.

CHU-SE, the laundress, and well-known to nearly every seafaring man, from skipper to deck hand, casting anchor in the harbour of Hong Kong, was a dainty specimen of the almond-eyed Celestial beauty. Piquantly small, daily did she toddle lightly on her little "golden lilies," to and fro between her abode on the frontiers of Tai-Ping-Shan and the Bund, where she found her *sampan*, with Oh-Yet, its presiding genius, ready to waft her on her round of visits to the ships in the bay.

Viewed from a Western standpoint, Chu-Se's history was strangely sensational. She was a lady with a past. This statement must not be taken in any way as invidious, for the little woman was so bright, so smilingly innocent, so lovable, indeed, that, although this same past of hers every now and again cast its shadow on her path, men adored her.

Men, mark you, not women. The Chinese beaux of her own quarter besieged persistently the little widow. Ay! Widow! That, at twenty-two, was her social position.

When but a mere child of a girl, and in obedience to parental command, she had wed the dashing Ah-Fong, with the result that the gentleman, for his piratical sins, suffered the "extreme penalty," in less than three months after his marriage day. Wooed again, and won by an enterprising ship's "comprador."

With a mate of such approved respectability and standing the lady might naturally look for a fairly peaceful marital experience. Alas! Sam-Ching was detected in fraudulent endeavours to over-reach the Revenue; this, together with the fact of the dead body of a native Custom House officer being found, head downwards, in the water-butt in Sam-Ching's back-yard, it is not surprising that that sharp-witted individual went under.

And so it was that Chu-Se, tired of her loneliness and all-undeterred by sad experience, ventured yet again upon the sea of matrimony. To sum up, six husbands did she, at short, very short, intervals take, cherish awhile, and anon incontinently bury.

As has been intimated, two out of the half-dozen met their end by an act of State; the remaining quartette—well, just faded out of life. Perhaps, who knows, Chu-Se was jealous. It is hard to say.

Anyway, they died, and the young and beautiful relict was left to pine for a venturous number seven.

It is at this particular point in the life-story of the fair Chu-Se that the extraordinary incident occurred which a certain officer of the Mercantile Marine will remember while terrestrial existence shall last.

* * * * *

The sun was vertically aggresive that day, reaching down, blazing hot, upon deck and sea.

The melted pitch in the plank seams bubbled and ran like to little black rivulets. Life was a burden, only to be made barely tolerable in the awning's shade, and with an ever-filled beaker of iced liquid at the elbow.

Jimmy Gatacre, second officer of the *Island Queen*, full of business watching the devious ways of John Chinaman as he boarded the vessel in shoals almost before she came to her moorings, at last gave up charge of the deck to the "third," going "below" to a well-earned rest.

Washed, pyjama'd, and comparatively comfortable, Jimmy's thoughts inclined to turning-in.

"Me so muchee glad, lily boy!"

Jimmy turned his head to behold a vision. A smiling mouth, and pair of sparkling black almond eyes, set in a little round face of the pearliest complexion. Small, very small, she held the door half-open, one baby foot upon the sill, and looked in upon the big Englishman with a winning confidence as disconcerting as it was bewitching.

He thought, sim le-hearted giant as he was, that it could be none other than a princess at the very least. The red umbrella she carried coquettishly over her shoulder, and which made a charming background to her head, formed a gorgeous medium for the sunlight which through it cast a roseate glow over her dainty little person.

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"Beg pardon, I'm sure," said Jimmy, stammeringly. "Can't very well ask you in, you know. Hold on, though. Here, Jack! Carstairs!"

From the cabin on the other and port side of the steward's cuddy came an answering shout:

"Hulloa! What's up?"

"Half a minute, Jack, just come over here for half a minute. I'm in a bit of a hole."

Meanwhile the fair visitor, closing her umbrella, had quietly slipped inside the cabin, and deliberately perched herself upon the nearest chest-top.

"Who's your friend, Jimmy?"

"I don't know who she is, from Adam,—or Eve rather; but it's a bit awkward, you know."

"Me muchee glad, lily boys," she said again. "Me wash you one dolla, alle same ten piecy."

A laundress! Jimmy collapsed. His princess had taken wing with a vengeance, while Carstairs roared again till the tears ran down his weather-stained cheeks.

"Jimmy, you'll be the death of me yet. Why, I remember her now. Of course, this is your first cruise in Chinese waters, so you wouldn't know her."

"Ah! Me sabe!" chirrupped Chu-Se, nodding her head energetically, looking knowingly from one to the other, and still smiling. "Me sabe! Me m'lember you! You m'lember me! Me washee you long time! Alle same, velly good."

But though addressing herself to Carstairs, Chu-Se's eyes were fixed upon Jimmy Gatacre. He seemed to possess some sort of fascination for her.

Jimmy was uneasily conscious of this, and eagerly desired to get rid of his visitor.

"You don't want me any more, do you?" said Carstairs, chuckling audibly.

"Yes, I do; don't go away, man, for Heaven's sake! Can't you see?"

"No; I'll be hanged if I can. If you've got any washing for her, give it her, and she'll go away as happy as a princess."

"That's just what I thought her to be," ruefully replied Jimmy.

"Well, I always thought you to be a bit of a softy, my son; but to take a laundress for a princess, ha! ha! that's a little too, too, isn't it?"

Chu-Se now began to think it better for her to retire.

"Me come soon, alle same uller day. Chu-Se velly glad."

She tripped outside as she had tripped in, put up her umbrella, and with a smile and a nod was gone.

"Pidgin English," said Carstairs, sententiously, "isn't the best of linguistic mediums, is it? She's a rum sort—had six husbands, they say, and she's only now about twenty-two or three. You'd better look out, Jimmy, or she'll be falling in love with you, and then, the last state of Jimmy Gatacre will be worse than the first."

"Don't be an ass, Jack; and now get out, for I want to sleep. I'm as tired as a dog."

Nothing was seen of the little laundress on board the *Island Queen* for several days. One evening, the day's work done, Jimmy was in his room writing a letter. Then he thought he heard two timid raps upon the door.

"Who's there?" he growled—he hated being disturbed when writing letters. "Who is it? What the dickens do you want?"

Getting no reply to his polite inquiry, Jimmy rose and opened the door. What he saw staggered him for the moment. Huddled up in a bunch upon the deck outside his cabin door sat Chu-Se, her face supported by her two hands, and with her eyes wistfully fixed upon Jimmy as he stood in the open doorway.

"What's up, Chu-Se? Anything I can do for you?" asked Jimmy.

And then she told him how that she was sick of living a lonely widow's life, more sick still of the unwelcome attentions of the gilded bachelor youth of Tai-Ping-Shan and its vicinity.

She had "plenty dolla" she said, which she was only too wishful to bestow upon Jimmy himself if he would only marry her and become the virtual head of the most prosperous laundry business in all China.

Only that it was too serious a matter to take in a ridiculous sense, Jimmy would have laughed outright. Then, too, there was this earnest-eyed little Celestial regarding him with almost worshipping wistfulness.

For the life of him he could not be aught but sorry for her. Angry? Certainly not, her very evident sincerity and trustfulness forbade that.

Very gently he explained to her the impossibility of such an arrangement, in that in his own country he had a sweetheart who was watching and waiting for a life with him of love and happiness.

She seemed to acquiesce in this, and at last came to see that her castle in the air had fallen into ruins, and that for her this thing might not, could not be.

Jimmy accompanied her to the gangway, saying to her as she stood at the head of the ladder:

"Cheer up, Chu-Se, you'll get a husband by-and-bye, and then you'll forget all about this silly fancy."

"Chu-Se never forget—never—alle same die."

"Nonsense!" Good-night, you foolish little woman."

Her eyes took a sad look, which touched Jimmy to the quick, for he knew he was the cause. He would not have believed that any woman not of his own race could have loved like this. It upset all his preconceived and life-long ideas with regard to the other and the weaker sex.

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And now she was descending the ladder, and Jimmy says that the look she gave him, as she paused midway a moment, lifting her face up to his, will haunt him to his dying day.

* * * * *

Jimmy is a grey-headed man now, with a stalwart son of his own; the log will soon tell of the voyage done. But often, in the quiet hours does the pleading face of Chu-Se rise before him, and he hears her again say that she will "never forget—never—alle same die."

Jimmy Gatacre himself never heard anything more of the little laundress, for it was his first and last visit to those seas. Yet her ultimate future is not altogether a mystery; whispers hint at another and, let us hope, a more fortunate and enduring union with one of her own race.

It is satisfactory to know this, and no heart-breaking dying-out-of-life was the fate of the much-married little woman.

* * * * *

The issues of life are great, but they oftentimes hang upon a thread. Beyond a doubt, there was just a chance, other conditions being favourable, that Chu-Se might have been Mrs. Jimmy Gatacre.

Ralph Enderby.

Visitor: "Well, baroness, so you have returned from your Italian tour. Now, you must tell me all you did in Rome."

Baroness: "Rome! Wait a moment." (To her daughter): "Emma, my dear, wasn't it in Rome I bought that beautiful dress improver? Yes, I thought so."

"What can you say of the second law of thought?"

Student: "It cannot both be and not be. For example, the door over there must be either shut or open; it cannot be both shut and open."

Tutor: "Give another illustration."

Student: "Well, take the case of another door."

"I thought you took instantaneous pictures," said the man in the photographer's gibbet; "but I verily believe I've sat here ten minutes."

"You shouldn't be impatient, sir," replied the camera fiend. "Instant, you know, means the present month, and the month is only half gone."

"You've got my seat, sir," said a man in a train who had left his seat for a moment.

"There is nothing to show that you have retained this seat."

"Look up there! There is my hat-box on the rack over this seat."

"Well, then, you sit up there on your hat-box if that's where you have retained your seat."

"I've lost a patient," said a doctor, sitting down to a boarding-house dinner table, with a frown on his face as dark as a gunpowder poultice.

"I am sorry to hear it. Man or woman?" asked one of the boarders.

"Man."

"When did he die?"

"Die? Hang him, he's not dead. He stopped taking my medicine, got well, and ran away without paying the bill."

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MY EMPTY HOLSTER.

A Prairie Adventure.

"*Buenos noches, amigo,*" cried the station-master of Frayle Muerto, bidding me "good-night," as I mounted my impatient horse, to set out for my lonely "rancho," some leagues distant over the wild prairie-land.

Frayle Muerto, or in English, the Dead Monk, was a small village at that time, and had just been honoured by the erection of a railway-station, containing a substantial refreshment bar; it being the midway stopping-place on the new line of railway, recently completed between the towns of Rosario and Cordova, situated in the Argentine Republic of South America.

My friend, Mr. Thompson, had been appointed station-master there, and feeling very lonely in his comparatively isolated condition—there was only one train daily—he was delighted to receive a visit from a fellow-countryman.

His neighbours, very few in number, were mostly natives of these parts. They are a rough, half-civilised lot, having more Indian than Spanish blood in their veins, and all the vices of both races in their hearts. In their manners and customs they are, to put it very mildly, unrefined, and the language they use is what might be called "vulgar Spanish."

The manager at the solitary railway-station did not, naturally, consider these natives to be very congenial or desirable companions. Mr. Thompson was loath to let me take my departure, although it was high time to do so, as we had sat in his little stat on-box chatting about old England till nearly midnight.

The moon was shining clear and full as I set off on my homeward journey; but my horse required neither light nor path, as it started at full gallop over the desolate prairie, knowing instinctively the shortest route to my *estancia*, or farm.

As we crossed over the long unbroken line of rails, gleaming in the moonlight as they stretched without curve or incline far away into the distance, we passed under the single line of telegraph, causing me to remember a good laugh Mr. Thompson and I had that evening over the remarks of two natives upon that scientific means of communication.

Neither of these two worthies had ever heard of such a thing as a telegraph, much less had they seen anything of the kind. The nearest approach to any such contrivance within their limited knowledge was a few wire fences some enterprising foreigners had put up round their fields.

Riding close to the railway, the couple of natives gazed in dignified amazement at the wire stretched high on the telegraph poles; then, shaking their wise heads, one of the philosophers addressed his companion, as they rode solemnly underneath the telegraph, saying:

"What incomprehensible idiots these railway-making English must be, to erect a wire fence only on one side of the railway, and at such a height that a man can ride under it on horseback!"

"Why," replied the other Soloman, "their ignorance is only equalled by their courtesy, as we cannot only ride under the fence, but it is raised to such an altitude that we need not even inconvenience ourselves by stooping while passing underneath!"

The natives of these parts, or "paisanos" as they call each other, are not only very ignorant, but they cannot conceive strangers, or rather foreigners, to be any wiser than themselves; and it was a countryman of the two wire-fence individuals who, having just been engaged by my friend the station-master at Frayle Muerto, inaugurated his intelligent services by attempting to stop a loaded truck, that was being slowly shunted on to a siding, by placing one of his feet before the advancing wheel, thereby causing him to retain possession for the future of only one foot, which, it need scarcely be stated, he never used for a similar purpose.

My horse was far too impatient to go round about the several colonies of "biscacho" holes we encountered on our short cut across camp, but bounded over them, taking many a leap that would have gratified the highest vaulting ambition of any horse-fancier. These biscachos are like our home rabbits, only they are a little larger and much more fierce. Their warrens are very similar, however. They are most destructive to vegetation and impudently tame. Hobbling off to the mouth of their holes on the approach of any one, they will turn round and stare him out of countenance, uttering a most tantalising mocking cry, which has such an incongruous sound, that any attempt to spell it on paper would be simply absurd. In fact, I only met with one man who could give anything like a correct imitation of their cry, and when doing so, his jaws were worked into such fearful shapes, that I used to wonder if they ever could assume their normal condition again.

These warrens are generally guarded by little owls, who, ever on the watch, give timely signal by their weird

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cry to the biscachos should any stranger appear. The owls, although very small, are not deficient in courage, as I found out once when passing one at its usual post of sentry.

Being amused at its supreme gravity, I tried in various ways to cause it to relax its seriousness a little, when to my astonishment, the bird flew after me, and made such vigorous attempts to get at my head, that I was obliged to beat it off with my riding-whip.

This was the only instance I ever met with, however, of an owl losing its centre of gravity, although occasionally I did not resist attempting to provoke their serene composure.

Part of my way home lay along a track used by caravans of bullock waggons on their journeys to and from Rosario: and it was while on this road that I met with an obstacle, or rather two obstacles, which nearly prevented my reaching home that night, or perhaps any other night, for that matter.

My horse, suddenly pricking up his ears, caused me to look ahead; and well in front I perceived two horsemen, proceeding in the same direction as I was, but at a much slower pace.

It did not take my horse long to get close up to them, and I then saw that they were "gauchos," or wild natives, having no home or calling, but moving about from one district to another, robbing what they could, alike careless of life and property, and having a special aversion to foreigners, or "gringos," as they called them, an expression meaning both insult and contempt.

That I was a gringo they would soon discover by my European costume; and that they would not only resent my being such, but make an attempt to deprive me of any valuables the said costume might contain, was pretty certain, even if they did not proceed to further extremities, which was not at all improbable, as they thought no more of murdering any one to obtain what they wanted than a good housewife would think of "squashing" a cockroach to insure a clean pantry. In fact, I have dined with gauchos who openly boasted of having killed from half-a-dozen to twelve men, and were accorded special respect from their less fortunate comrades, who, perhaps, could only boast of two or three little affairs of a like calibre.

I was not going to turn out of my way unless compelled to do so, for both myself and my horse were impatient to get home; so I rode on, and as I passed bade them good-night after the Spanish fashion. They, instead of saluting me, as all good natives would have done, spurred their horses after mine, and demanded to know where I was going. The only reply they got from me was a question (I am a Scotchman).

I asked them where they were going. "*Por alla*," was the response from one of them, which, meaning "over yonder," was somewhat vague. I now got a good view of the fellows, and they certainly were not beauties. They were, without doubt, very tall and well built; but the ill-looking and vicious expression of their countenances would have made the fortune of any villain in modern melodrama.

The sombreros, though broad-brimmed, did not hide the coarse matted hair that hung down over their temples; while the shaggy eyebrows, thick whiskers, and heavy beards did their best to conceal the ingrained dirt on their swarthy faces, which, I suppose were never washed unless, it might be, by some passing showers. The costumes they wore were in keeping with their appearance. Over the large Spanish hats were gaudily-coloured handkerchiefs, which, being tied under the chin in fanciful loop-knots, formed the triple purpose of sunshade, ribbons, and necktie.

Ponchos, or cloaks, hung loosely over their broad shoulders, and immense top-boots, reaching above the knee, impressed on the bright leather with strange, green-coloured devices, carried on the heels conspicuous spurs, with rowels of great size and cruel shape. Besides the well-known "lasso" each gaucho had the "bolas" ready to hand.

This latter weapon consists of three pieces of strong, untanned hide fastened together, each about a yard in length, and having attached to them large wooden or leaden balls, which prove very effective if used skilfully.

The natives, when chasing wild horses and cattle, use these bolas by swinging them round and round, then letting them go straight for the legs of the animal they are after. The balls, by their weight, twist the thongs round the legs of the galloping beast, causing it to come to the ground, generally head over heels.

These balls are also frequently used by the gauchos to trip up the horse of any rider they may wish to catch, sometimes throwing them at the horseman himself, whom, if they hit, they are sure to stun, and sometimes kill outright, should the heavy balls come in contact with any vulnerable part.

I saw both gauchos were getting their bolas ready for action; but still they appeared to be unwilling to proceed to extremes, perhaps hoping that I would quietly surrender, which, however, I had no intention of doing.

My horse, whether aware of any danger or not, was certainly becoming almost unmanageable, in its impatience at the restraint I was putting on the pace, as I was not willing the men should imagined I intended bolting from them.

The clear moonlight shone brightly on the polished steel handles of their large knives, which the gauchos had in short sheaths attached to the broad belts they wore round their waists.

In lieu of buttons, coins of various descriptions are utilised as fastenings for these belts; the coins being of all dates, and sometimes of considerable worth, their owners taking considerably greater interest in the relative value of the buttons than they have in any other portion of their apparel, unless it be their spurs and bridle-bits, of which articles they are inordinately fond.

The two gauchos were, by this time, riding only a few yards behind me and asking me several questions, the exact text of which I cannot now remember; but the purport was as to why I should go about at night alone and unarmed, and—as they would surmise—with articles of value about me.

No wiser were they by such replies as I chose to give them, and they soon ceased questioning me, commencing to speak in undertones together, apparently consulting as to what they should do.

My great object then was, while taking care to keep a few yards of distance between us, still not to let the gauchos think I suspected them of having any designs of attack upon me.

After proceeding for some time in this uncomfortable mode of progression, I came to the spot where my quickest way home was by a small sheep-track, which here led over the camp at right-angles to the road on which we were travelling.

Not sorry to leave my two companions, I now bade them farewell, remarking at the same time that this was *my* road; and giving the horse full rein, it galloped along the sheep-track. The gauchos, however, heedless of the good old adage that "two's company, but three's

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none," insisted upon keeping up the "triple alliance" by hurrying after me, shouting out that their road, fortunately (?), lay that way as well. I knew this statement was untrue, as the track led "nowhere," losing itself in the prairie not far from my *estancia*.

However, it would have been useless to get up an argument with them about the matter at that time and place, while it would be equally futile to try and convince them of the culpability of saying a thing which "was not." But I remember well crying out to them that I could travel alone nicely.

The two horsemen, however, came after me at full gallop; but it so happened that my horse was at "fuller gallop," if the term may be used; for the animal had taken the bit between his teeth, and consequently would suit the pace to his own mind, and he did so with a vengeance; the speed was terrific.

Although sorry to think of how the gauchos would conclude they had frightened me into running away, I did not put myself much about while in the open camp, being quite confident my horse's speed would equal, if not exceed, that of my pursuers; but what soon began to give me great uneasiness was the fact of our having to pass right through a wood, which now was not far off.

To be carried through a small forest on the back of a horse whose sole ambition, for the time being, was to exceed the speed of lightning, and not leave different parts of my body on various outstretching branches, seemed to be an utter impossibility. Of course the gauchos would then, besides my personal effects, have my body to share between them; "a leg to you and an arm to me, and so on;" but I never had the least ambition to undergo the process known as amputation, more especially in such a wholesale fashion.

All sorts of plans I tried to pull up my horse. Standing, for instance, in the stirrups, and getting one end of the bridle round me, I lay back as far as possible, thus making a lever of my body, and drawing the horse's head against my knee. This mode of procedure on my part made little difference in the mode of procedure on the horse's part, only causing it to deviate slightly from the straight course, while it gave the gauchos considerable gain on me.

There was no help for it; into the wood we must go. I made myself as small as I could, wondering how much less I should be when we got out on the other side. Although by this time I had made my horse make a considerable detour. I could not compel him to avoid the trees; and as my steed dived in amongst them, I took the strain off the bridle, giving him a fair chance of steering clear of the branches.

I think my horse had been rendered giddy by running so far with his head looking behind him, as his course was for a while very unsteady, thus making it much worse for his hapless rider, who never knew on which side of a tree he would be hurled past.

Yes, the position was very exciting, but intensely uncomfortable, and the marvellous twists I was obliged to give my body in trying to avoid hosts of protruding branches from different directions at the same moment, and still retain my mounted position, would have astonished any boneless acrobat. One instant a low-lying branch would cause me to flatten myself on the horse's back, and the next my body would be stretched at extreme right-angles from the saddle to avoid an immense limb of a tree on my left.

The speed was so great, and the turns so sharp and unexpected, that I knew it would only confuse my steed

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were I to attempt to guide it, and I let the bridle hang loose over its neck.

So on we flew in a manner jerky enough to have suggested to any observant navigator the impression that I and my horse were attempting to arrive at every point of the compass at one and the same time.

I soon got so giddy and confused that I found myself obliged eventually to crouch down in the sadddle, trusting to luck and branches obligingly growing high enough to allow of a free passage underneath. As we passed out of the wood at last into the open camp again, I commenced cautiously instituting a search as to how much of myself was wanting; and I was greatly relieved to find that, while several rather necessary parts of my garments had been left behind, my body was still intact.

Evidently a little depressed by the innumerable forms of the letter S he had made during his short but painfully circuitous route through the wood, my horse quieted down considerably; and allowing me to get the bit properly adjusted, set off at a respectable canter.

I could not see any signs of my late pursuers, and was greatly annoyed thereby, being naturally anxious to explain that it was my horse, and not myself, who had run away from from them. Surely, I thought, they would never be so mean as to have remained behind in the wood, disputing over such insignificant parts of clothing as had marked the course of my wild career? One piece of coat-tail and a few miscellaneous shreds from various portions of my wearing apparel would be comparatively useless to them. And then there was the time they were losing.

My conjectures were soon arrested by the sudden appearance of the two gauchos, who came riding round some outlying trees not a hundred yards off.

They had taken a straight run through the wood, while my horse had been serpentining about it, thus overtaking me easily. I could see the gauchos now meant mischief.

Although they did not evidently wish to come to close quarters, they had the bolas unstrapped. These weapons are more effective when thrown from a little distance, as they thus gain a good impetus.

I would have taken out my revolver now and fired, giving my two enemies a few chambers each if necessary; but, unfortunately, I had left that useful little instrument of warfare at home, and my only weapon of defence was a small penknife.

There was yet time to gallop off away over the wide camp-land. I had occasion once or twice before to put this same horse which I now rode to the test of speed and endurance, and the faithful animal had proved himself well worthy of my confidence. I was determined, however, that running away should be my last resource; so, facing the gauchos, I cried aloud in their own language to them to get out of my path and let me pass by. Their only reply was a demand that I would immediately dismount and let my horse loose.

They appeared to be so confident of my compliance with this modest request that they reined their steeds closer to me, thus showing they already surmised my want of firearms, of which, by the way, they have a great dread. I wonder now I felt so cool at the moment when the gauchos, enraged at my paying no heed to their orders, advanced nearer, swinging the bolas, which the next instant they might let fly at me.

It was hopeless attempting to escape now, their lassos and bolas would soon have put an end to my flight. While doing all I could to nerve myself against a strong despair that was crushing down upon me in this great emergency, I suddenly hit upon a likely means of rescue, which I at once put in execution.

Although I had forgotten to bring my revolver, its holster was, as usual, suspended to my waist-belt. Being well aware of the horror and fear gauchos have of any firearms, I now stood up in my stirrups, and raising my coat with one hand, placed the other to my empty holster, and cried to the advancing highwaymen:

"Another whirl of your bolas or another inch nearer, and I shall fire!"

The moon's rays fell clear upon my revolver's sheath; the gauchos stopped suddenly, looked at each other, and then without a word turned round and fled from me, lying over their horses' necks as they did so, doubtless expecting a few bullets to be sent after them.

My horse and I jogged quietly home; and as I was retiring to rest I could not help smiling when I looked at my revolver, snugly lying under my bed-pillow, where I had unthinkingly left it that morning.

James Hogg.

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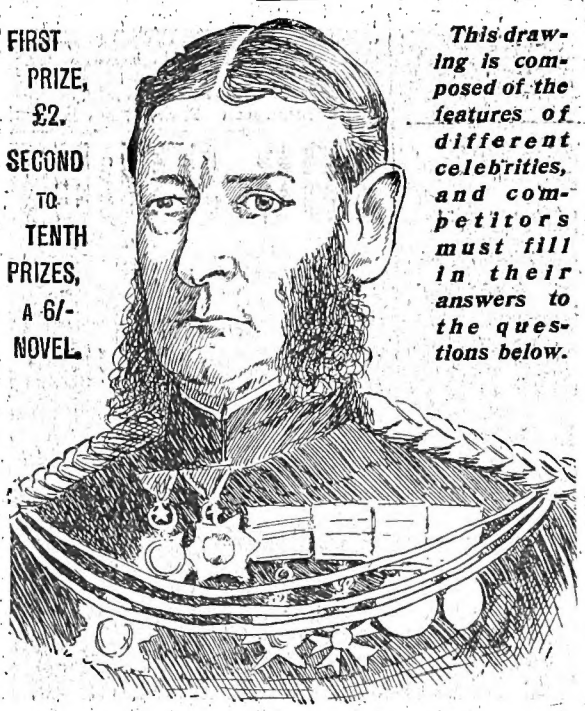

This drawing is composed of the features of different celebrities, and competitors must fill in their answers to the questions below.

1. The forehead is that of .....
2. The right eye is that of .....
3. The left eye is that of .....
4. The nose is that of .....
5. The mouth is that of .....
6. The whiskers are those of .....
7. The ear is that of .....

Name.....

Address.....

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The first prize will go to the reader from whom we receive the correct solution. In the event of a tie the prize will be awarded to the sender of the first correct solution dealt with.

If no correct solutions are sent in the prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes. The Editor's decision is final, and all competitors must enter on that understanding.

All attempts to reach this office by Monday, September 24th, in envelopes marked "Composite."

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A gold-plated pencil-case will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

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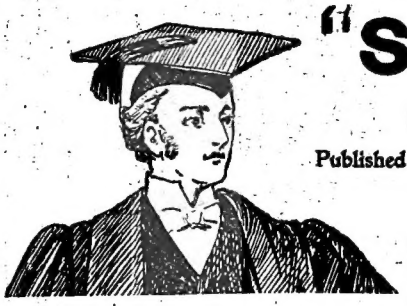

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